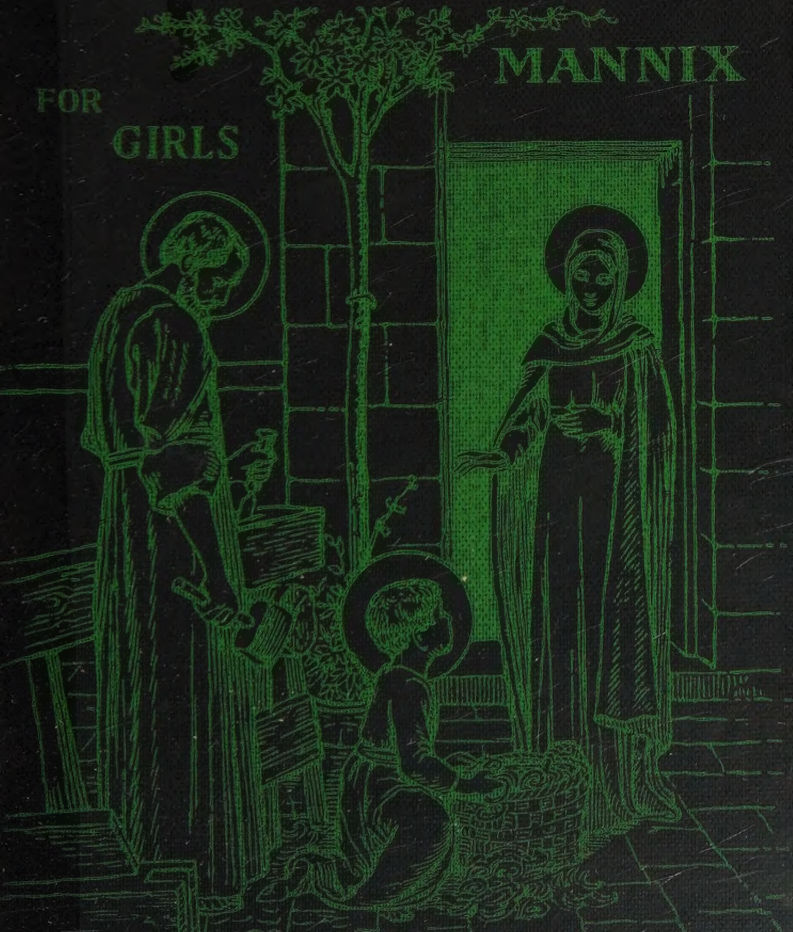
ILLUSTRATED LIVES OF PATRON SAINTS

FOR GIRLS

MANNIX



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ILLUSTRATED LIVES
OF
PATRON SAINTS FOR GIRLS

By

MARY E. MANNIX

NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO
BENZIGER BROTHERS
Printers to the Holy Apostolic See

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Nihil Obstat.

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✠ JOHN M. FARLEY,
Archbishop of New York

New York, November 6, 1905

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Printed in the United States of America.

ST. ANNE AND THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

ST. ANNE

MOTHER OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN

WHEN our first parents, thrust out of the Garden of Eden, heard the voice of the Lord condemning them to labor, exile, and death, they were not left without hope for the future. It was promised them that, as by a woman sin had come into the world, so by another woman the head of the serpent should be crushed, and the guilty race of Adam redeemed. This woman was Mary, who became the Mother of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer.

Ages after ages rolled on, the world became more and more sunk in sin and corruption; even the Jews, the chosen people of God, forgetting all they owed

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to the Almighty, were ungrateful and wavering. They even went so far as to fall into idolatry several times, yet God was never tired of forgiving them and bringing them back to a belief in His fatherhood and His divine promises. Through all their trials, labors, misfortunes, prosperity, and adversity, one bright star still shone above the pathway of the chosen people, — their hope of a Messias, who was to be born of the royal line of David.

As the period announced by the prophets approached, and the Jews, now under the dominion of the Romans, still hoped for the fulfilment of the great prophecy, there lived at Nazareth, a city of lower Galilee, later to become so famous, a just man named Joachim, of the tribe of Juda and the race of David. His wife was named Anne, or Hannah as it is called in Hebrew, and both were known

among their neighbors for the purity of their lives. We may infer that they were in comfortable circumstances, as the Gospel says nothing of their poverty. They passed their days in prayer, almsgiving, and other good works, but they had one bitter drop in their cup of peace: they had no child. They had been married twenty years, were no longer young, and had resigned themselves to the thought that their dying eyes would not be closed by their children or their children's children. But God looked with a gracious eye upon this noble and virtuous pair, when they had given up all hope of offspring, a daughter was born to them, who was to be called the Mystical Rose, the Lily of Israel, the Star of the Sea, who was to shed her beauteous light for all time upon the stormy ocean of the world.

She was to be the Queen of Heaven and

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earth, yet her cradle was not of gold, nor were her garments of costly texture; she was to be the Mother of the Son of God, of the long-expected and long-desired Messias, yet her birth was heralded in no royal fashion.

There was, however, something most fitting and prophetic in the name given her by her parents on the ninth day, that of Miriam, or Mary, which in Syriac means *lady, sovereign, mistress,* and in Hebrew, *Star of the Sea.* We cannot help wondering whether St. Anne, as she gazed upon the lovely features of her infant daughter, the child of her old age and of many prayers, did not feel the divine charm of that name, of such marvelous sweetness, so delightful to pronounce, so beautiful to write.

May it not be that she, too, had a foresight of the meaning of that name of Mary, which, writes St. Anthony of Padua,

"is sweeter to the lips than honeycomb, more flattering to the ear than the sweetest music, more delicious to the heart than the purest joy"?

It was a custom among the Jews for the mother to go up to the Temple to offer a sacrifice of thanksgiving eighty days after the birth of a daughter. According to the law, if rich, she offered a lamb; if not, a pair of turtle-doves, and we doubt not this latter was the gift of St. Anne.

But like her predecessor and namesake, Anne, the wife of Elcana and the mother of the Prophet Samuel, St. Anne went further than the Jewish law commanded. She resolved to offer her treasure, her pearl, her one precious thing, to the service of the Lord, to lay upon the Altar of the Most High the crown of her old age, as soon as the child should be old enough to know good

from evil. Joachim ratified this vow of his wife, and together they returned to their home, bearing in their arms the light of their lives and the hope of their existence. Thus it was that as she watched the child of benediction growing apace beside her, St. Anne must often have felt a pang at heart to think how soon she must be separated from her. But this pious mother never faltered, feeling that the Lord had only lent this treasure. When the harvest had been gathered for the third time since their return from the Temple, she set forth again with her husband to dedicate Mary to God's service among the other maidens of the Temple.

It is said that Joachim and his wife chose the most inclement season of the year for this journey; why, we are not able to state. It may have been that the period during which they had in-

tended keeping her with them having passed, they felt in duty bound to take her at once to Jerusalem, or, as some historians relate, they timed their going with that of the service of the priest Zachary in the Temple.

Zachary was the husband of Elizabeth, afterwards the mother of John the Baptist, and a relative of Anne and Joachim. On account of the inclemency of the weather, St. Anne preferred to take the longest route to Jerusalem instead of traveling towards the Holy City through the deep ravines of Samaria, where winter ruled with its frosts. They descended by the shrubby slopes of Carmel into that region so mild that orange groves bloom there while the surrounding country is chill and cold. It is not amiss either to suppose that St. Anne was desirous of retaining her daughter as long as possible — that child from

whom henceforward, dearly as they loved her, father and mother must dwell apart. At last they came in sight of Jerusalem, which they entered by the gate of Rama. The standard of Judas Maccabeus still floated from its summit; but the people within were under the dominion of the Romans, for the Thracians, Galatians, and fair-haired sons of Gaul who kept them in subjection were paid hirelings of King Herod, as greatly detested by the Jews as their master.

Through dark and winding streets the travelers must have passed before coming to the house in which they sojourned while in Jerusalem, and which tradition still points out as the dwelling of St. Anne.

When at length they came to the Temple, it is related that a company of the best and most illustrious people of their race conducted them to the Court

of Presentation, where the child was to be offered to the Lord.

It was in the Court of the women that St. Anne gave up her treasure to the keeping of those who were to train her not only in the service of God, but also in all those womanly arts and industries for which the Jewish maidens were so well known. Bearing Mary in her arms, and wearing a white veil upon her own head, according to tradition, she knelt before the priest, and lifting up the child exclaimed, "I come to offer the gift which God has given me."

So Mary entered the Temple of God, and her father and mother returned to their home. The reader can imagine the loneliness of St. Anne when she reentered the dwelling which for three years and a half the Lily of Israel had brightened and sanctified. But she was a valiant woman, this mother in Israel, and took

up her usual duties again as before. It must not be supposed, either, that during the years the Blessed Virgin remained in the Temple her mother did not see her. It was the custom for every pious Jew to go up to Jerusalem once a year; many repaired to the Temple for all the solemn Festivals. We may be sure that St. Anne availed herself of this privilege to visit her daughter.

We can picture her setting her house in order before starting, wrapping her traveling veil about her, and setting forth with Joachim to the city, where her treasure dwelt with her young companions. How long and yet how short the way must have seemed that led to Jerusalem, for every step brought her nearer to Mary. Arrived there, she would be likely to catch the first glimpse of Mary as she passed in procession with the other virgins, all bearing lamps in their hands.

When the Festival was over, St. Anne would hasten to meet Mary, and together with Joachim they would spend some time in happy conversation. No doubt Joachim left them now and then to chat with his friends, or perhaps transact business; but we may be almost certain that St. Anne remained every moment of the time with the child whom she had come so far to see, and whose sweet smiles and loving words she would cherish until another Festival brought her again within the sacred confines of the Holy City. And when the last adieus had been said, the last embraces given, every mother knows that St. Anne turned away and began her journey without once looking back, though her heart lay in spirit close to that of her daughter, upon the memory of whose looks and tones she was to linger for many days as she went about her household work, or knelt in prayer at eventide.

As years rolled on, Joachim became more feeble; the cares of his farm were too much for him, and tradition says that he and St. Anne took up their residence in Jerusalem. From this time onwards, St. Anne had the pleasure of seeing Mary more frequently. How many times while sitting on the flat-terraced roof of her house, turning her spindle, or embroidering some vesture for the Temple, must she not have turned her eyes towards that noble and majestic building, her gaze thoughtfully fixed on the roof of cedar and gold. "Where a man's treasure is, there is his heart," says the Scripture, and St. Anne's heart was with the Lily of Israel.

We are told that when the Blessed Virgin had been about nine years in the Temple, her father, St. Joachim, died. According to the custom of the Jews, St. Anne put on mourning, and we may

presume Mary also joined her in this. Clothed in a coarse camlet cloth, light and without folds, the head and feet bare, for seven days the Jewish mourners sat upon the ground, praying for the soul of the deceased. When the seven days were passed, lamps were lighted in the synagogue and alms distributed that the souls of the dead might find favor with the Judge of Heaven and earth. Thus did St. Anne weep and pray for the husband whom she loved.

"Thou art welcome, O misfortune, if thou comest alone!" say the Greeks. But alone it seldom comes, and St. Anne soon followed St. Joachim. It is natural to suppose that the Blessed Virgin was with her in her last hours. Accompanied by some of her relatives, she sought her mother's dying bed, probably in the evening, when the red and feeble rays of a lamp gleamed across the narrow

trellised windows of the dwelling. St. Anne had been waiting for her. Extending her arms to embrace her daughter, she blessed her with all the benedictions of the Jews, so beautiful and so wise.

Her worldly affairs were in order; she had provided for the future of Mary by confiding her to the care of relatives, probably Zachary and Elizabeth. Her soul was at peace. She was about to rejoin the husband of her youth. About her were gathered the women of her acquaintance. Already the mourners who were preparing to set up their wild lamentations waited outside. Mary knelt at the bedside, her beautiful, golden hair mingling with the gray locks of her mother. Moment by moment she watched that failing breath; and as the last sigh died away on the lips of St. Anne, Mary gave vent to a single burst of sorrow. Then, as was usual among her people, she

closed the eyes of her mother, clasped the dead form in her arms, and imprinting a kiss upon the cold brow turned away, leaving the revered body to the ministrations of the women.

It is true that we know very little of the life of St. Anne; we can only picture it as that of any other virtuous Jewish woman of good lineage of the place and time. But history and tradition have always allotted to her a high place in the archives of sanctity, as is befitting one whom God had ordained from all eternity to be the mother of His own Mother. For this reason she has been chosen like St. Monica as the special Patroness of Christian mothers. There is no picture more beautiful or devotional than that of St. Anne seated at the door of her dwelling, her distaff on the floor beside her, a piece of embroidery in her lap, and Mary standing beside her holding a scroll

of parchment, from which her mother is teaching her to read. It is a beautiful portrayal of motherhood and childhood, and to the devout Christian a profitable lesson of sublime adherence to duty.

St. Anne probably numbers her most faithful clients among the people of Brittany. Since the days of King Arthur and the Round Table, romance, which in these modern days has lost its hold on other peoples, still finds a home in that country of the Celts. This interesting land still clings to the past. Protestantism never has been able to fasten its tenets upon it; it is still the home of piety, penitence, and "Pardons," or pilgrimages. To attend a Breton "Pardon" is to transport one's self to the Middle Ages. The language, the customs, the dress of the people, remain unchanged. But the most famous of these pilgrimages is that of St. Anne d'Auray, who is the Patroness of

sailors, Brittany being in an especial manner the country of sailors.

The "Pardon" is held on the eve of the Feast of St. Anne, July 25th, and had its origin some centuries ago.

The legend runs that St. Anne appeared to a man named Nicolazie, and revealed to him where to find a statue of herself which had been buried for a long period of time. He recovered it, and it was eventually placed in a church dedicated to her honor. During the French Revolution it was barbarously destroyed, only a fragment being preserved. There is also a miraculous spring on the spot where St. Anne first appeared to Yves Nicolazie.

The "Pardon" lasts three days. Formerly everybody traveled to the place on foot, but of late years it is reached by excursion trains, which take away some of the romance, though, it is to be hoped, none of the devotion.

Here may be met persons from every rank of life, — bishops, priests, lawyers, professors, sailors, peasants, farmers, the blind, the maimed, the deaf and dumb, the deformed and diseased, a few led thither by curiosity, but the greater number through piety or the desire and hope of being cured of some affliction. Every costume of Brittany is found at St. Anne d'Auray, because people come from the most remote parts to attend the Festival, and there is no garb of that romantic land which is not quaint, beautiful, and picturesque; and here we must note a very edifying feature of these gatherings. Strangers from other countries and of alien faith are always present. In almost every other land the people would be distracted by this, and equally so in almost any other congregation there would be, at least, some chattering and loud talking. But these devout Bretons look

neither to the right nor to the left; they pursue their devotions as though there were no one to see but themselves and the God whom they worship and the good St. Anne who is His handmaiden. Seated on the ground outside the church, they listen to a sermon in their own language, as the crowds could never be contained within walls. When the sermon is finished, they form in procession and march through all parts of the grounds, singing the Litany of St. Anne. Afterwards they sit on the grass once more to eat their midday meal, and later another procession takes them to the miraculous fountain, where they speedily put themselves to drinking its waters, dipping their handkerchiefs in them in order to bathe affected parts of their bodies, and filling bottles from the spring for the same purpose. Thousands of miraculous cures have been worked here, as the

numerous votive offerings left behind will testify.

On the next day, the 26th, a grand High Mass is said, besides many Low Masses. The Feast closes with a magnificent torchlight procession, which has been the subject of many beautiful paintings by famous artists. The following morning the people return to their homes in the same quiet, devotional manner in which they came. There is scarcely a household in this simple country in which may not be found a picture of St. Anne, seldom a work of art, but always given the first place in the home after that of the Holy Family. This devotion extends to all parts of France, where there are many noted shrines dedicated to the mother of Our Lady. In America also the devotion has its fervent clients. The Pilgrimage of St. Anne de Beaupré, yearly held at her shrine in Canada, has become

known all over the United States, and thousands gather every year to celebrate at that memorial of faith and piety the "Feast of the good St. Anne."

To be canonized as saints all must have been proved saintly, but the especial title which is given to the mother of the Blessed Virgin indicates the affection with which she is regarded. It is tender, intimate in its meaning, showing that the love which is felt for her is of a peculiar character. St. Anne de Beaupré is also a shrine of wonders. Not a pilgrimage takes place but what we hear an account of some cure wrought through her intercession. We cannot help regarding her as a kind of gentle, loving, indulgent, and compassionate grandmother, to whom we may go, as children, confident that she will shield us from punishment. We feel that her arms are ever open to receive us, that no matter what may be our com-

plaint or petition, even if it cannot be granted, it will be heard and our troubled heart soothed and consoled.

Tender mother of the tenderest of mothers, she who formed Mary when a child to be a model of virtue is herself a vessel of grace and beneficence. By such as she does God glorify His power and perpetuate His honor. By such as she does He show us that the sin of Adam, our inheritance, can be atoned for if only we set ourselves to the task of living their lives and following their example. It is perfectly allowable to imagine that she is very close to Our Lady in Heaven, that if one saint has more power than another to hear and help us, St. Anne must surely have a goodly share of privileges which it is her right and pleasure to confer on those who solicit her aid.

Let us then invoke her to guide our footsteps as she guided those of Mary

before she carried her in offering to the Temple of Jerusalem. Although we may never have the good fortune to wend our way in pilgrimage to the famous Breton shrine, or even to offer our orisons at our own American shrine of St. Anne de Beaupré, there are none among us who may not erect an altar to her in our hearts, before which we shall find profit and consolation in repeating with the pious peasants of Brittany, "Pray for us, good Saint Anne."

ST. AGNES.

ST. AGNES

ST. JEROME tells us that the tongues and pens of all nations are employed in the praises of this Saint, who was martyred in the city of Rome during the persecution of Diocletian. Next to the Immaculate Mother of God, St. Agnes is revered as the special Patroness of purity. The name Agnes signifies in Greek, chaste, and in Latin, a lamb. There is nothing that appeals more to children than the sight of a gentle, spotless lamb. It is loving and tender, weak and helpless, as in one sense was the Saint whose life we are about to contemplate. But in things most essential, though pure, delicate, and undefiled, she was strong, brave, and firm; nothing

could induce her to deny her faith nor to break the solemn vows she had made in God's service.

St. Agnes was the daughter of wealthy parents, citizens of Rome; some have averred, of noble ancestry. Her parents were not young when she was born, and she was their only child; all their hopes and ambitions were centered in her; she had every luxury which wealth could command at her disposal, but her tastes were so simple that she despised all luxury. The parents of Agnes were themselves far from being devoted to the things of this world. The greater part of their large and beautiful house had been dedicated to the service of the sick and poor, although this was not generally known, as in those days Christians, in order not to call attention to themselves, were obliged to perform their good deeds in secret. The family occupied that por-

tion of the house which faced the street. as solid wall separated this part of the dwelling from a second court, where, surrounded by a large garden, a former dining-room had been turned into a chapel, and the remainder of the apartments devoted to charity. It was mostly by night that those who dwelt in this place or who frequented it came and went. Here the sick were brought after nightfall on litters, and again removed when they were cured, or carried quietly to the Catacombs to be buried if death claimed them. Here the poor came at midnight to receive alms which had been acquired by the sale of the ornaments and jewels of pious Christians glad and eager to sell what they did not need, in order to distribute charity among their less fortunate brethren. In such an atmosphere as this Agnes was nurtured, with nothing to spoil or warp the natural good-

ness of her heart. She was adored by every member of the household, from her parents down to the humblest servant.

As Agnes grew up, her great beauty attracted the attention of all who beheld her. Many young men of Rome were desirous of becoming suitors for her hand, but Agnes gave them no encouragement. She had long ago vowed to consecrate herself to God, and her humility was so great that she could never imagine herself to be the admiration and desire of any suitor. A certain young man called Fulvius had long wished to make Agnes his wife, but found no means of becoming acquainted with her. At last he determined to go boldly to the house and introduce himself, as his pride and egotism were extreme, and he thought it an honor for any one to number him among their friends.

He went boldly one day to the principal entrance, and the first person he saw

was Agnes, walking lightly across the courtyard. As soon as she saw him she paused, and politely asked his errand.

"It is early, Lady Agnes," replied Fulvius, with great self-confidence; "but I wished to number myself among your friends, and could no longer control my impatience."

Agnes looked beyond him, not at him, as she answered, "The Lord of this house is the ruler of all within it."

"But," continued Fulvius, "I allude to your own charms, so brilliant, so entrancing to all who behold them."

Then did Agnes speak the memorable words which have been inserted into her Office:—

"To Him whose beauty sun and moon in their lofty firmament gaze on and admire are pledged my service and my love."

The miserable Fulvius, pagan and sinner, did not know that the pure Christian

maiden was alluding to the God of Heaven and earth in this sublime speech. He thought she had meant him to understand that she had plighted her troth to some other suitor; and when in addition to this he was ordered from the house, he vowed vengeance on all concerned. He had already suspected Agnes of being a Christian, and although the fact was well known in Rome, it was not the policy in time of peace to disturb persons so influential as her parents and their friends. Fulvius conceived the idea of denouncing Agnes as a Christian, as the persecution of Diocletian had already broken out, and he hoped thus to get her in his power. He had no idea but that rather than submit to torture, perhaps death, she would listen to his suit. However, before doing this, he resolved to make another trial.

Hearing that she had gone to spend a

few days at a suburban villa belonging to her father, he followed her there and found her walking in the garden. When Agnes saw him, she started with surprise and made a movement as if to dismiss him, but he came nearer.

"Lady Agnes," he said, "I have come to repeat once more the expression of my sincere regard; I beg that you will marry me."

"My promise has already been given," she replied.

Fulvius glanced at the white veil she had thrown over her head, such a one as it was the custom to wear as a sign of betrothal.

"Is that veil you wear a sign that you are promised beyond recall?" he asked.

"Yes," she replied once more, in the words that have come down to us through her sacred Office. "It is the sign that my Beloved has placed upon my coun-

tenance, that I recognize no lover but Himself."

As she stood there so innocent and beautiful, so childlike and yet so stately, Fulvius drew back. She waved him aside; but again, filled with rage and disappointment that another should have secured the prize he coveted, he endeavored to take her hand. Then raising herself to her full height, the clear brightness of her eye dismaying and awing him, she cried, "My heart is already bestowed on one for whom alone I keep my troth, to whom I entrust myself with undivided devotion: one whose love is chaste, whose caress is pure, whose brides never put off their virginal wreaths."

At this Fulvius flung himself at her feet, but Agnes again repulsed him and bade him begone. Then it was that the demon entered into his soul and he rushed furious from the garden, resolved to

revenge himself upon her and his hated rival, whoever that might be. As we have said before, a new persecution was now under way against the Christians; many had already been brought before the Emperor and condemned to death because they would not sacrifice to the deities of Rome. During these periods of persecution they were accused on all sides and thrown into prison, from which they seldom went forth, except to death. We who live in an age and country where we enjoy the freedom of our religion can hardly realize how great were the sufferings and how grand the courage of those men and women of the olden times who died for their faith. A prison in ancient Rome was not a comfortable place. Several of these terrible dungeons still remain; from them we can have an idea of what the Roman prisons were. They were not usually divided into cells,

so that the poor wretches there confined could not enjoy even the luxury of being alone. As later in the famous prisons of the French Reign of Terror, a great number of persons were crowded into one large room. These chambers were underground, usually one beneath the other, so that while the upper one was bad enough, the second was still worse. There was only one large, round hole near the top of each room for air and ventilation. The walls, of stone, were very thick; rings were fastened all along the sides, to which many of the prisoners were chained: some of them so high that they could neither sit nor lie down; some of them so low that they could not stand up, but were forced to huddle on the damp floor. To add to their pains, it was the custom to strew about broken glass and fragments of brick, on which the poor inmates were obliged to sleep.

It was into such a place as this that the holy Roman maiden was cast, when, through the accusation of Fulvius, she was arrested for being a Christian. It was called the Tullian prison. Agnes was taken to trial, condemned to death, and returned to the prison to await her doom.

Fulvius was surprised to learn that she had not been in the least changed by the terrible ordeal she had undergone.

She occupied a cell alone, as her people had influence and money. Fulvius went to the prison and was at once admitted to see Agnes. She met him with a clear, full glance.

"Madam," he said, "I have come, if you are willing, to lengthen your days."

"My days are numbered," Agnes replied.

"I can lengthen them to years," he went on, "and, besides, I can give you happiness."

Agnes smiled.

"Do not mock me, Fulvius," she answered. "Thus to address one whom you have delivered to death is both useless and cruel."

"I do not mean to be cruel. Your life is in your own hands. At one word your prison doors will be thrown open."

"I shall never speak that word."

"You do not understand me, madam. Only come with me and no questions will be asked of you; they will suppose that you have decided to renounce your errors. If you wish, you can still be a Christian — in secret — when you are my wife."

"That I will never be. My faith I will never deny; for to conceal it now would be to deny it, Fulvius. And I have already told you, many times, that Jesus Christ is my only spouse."

"Folly! Madness! Have you no fear?"

"I fear nothing but sin. For know that I have an angel guarding me, who will not suffer his Master's handmaid to be scorned. Leave me, Fulvius. I wish to be alone."

And now the rage of Fulvius broke forth — his love had turned to hatred.

Not long after, perhaps that same day, Agnes was led out to execution. Slowly and calmly she walked between two guards. With downcast eyes, her thoughts far from earth, she stood at length before the Judge, in the open Forum.

"Why is she unchained?" cried the great man, angrily.

"She made no resistance, and she is so young," pleaded the guard.

"Chain her," replied the Judge. "Put fetters on her hands."

The guard then began to search among the heap of manacles lying on the ground for a pair small enough to fit her delicate

wrists. At length he found some, very light, which he thought would answer. Agnes held out her hands, and the fetters fell clattering at her feet.

This only served to anger the Judge still more. Again he questioned her, but Agnes answered him as she had done at her trial. Nothing could move her, nothing could frighten her.

"Let her be beheaded," cried the furious man.

The executioner prepared to obey him. "Where shall it be done, most noble sir?" he asked.

"Here, and now, this moment," was the answer.

Agnes stepped forward. Her face, pale and lovely, was filled with the light of Heaven. Clad in a loose white robe, her hands clasped in front of her, her beautiful hair wound about her head like a crown of amber, she might have been

already a member of that angelic choir she was so soon to join.

"Tear the robe from her shoulders," commanded the Judge. "Her neck must be bare to the knife."

Then for the first time did the noble maiden tremble. Then for the first time did she shrink and raise her hands in pleading. A crimson blush overspread her brow and face and throat. She could not bear the thought of being uncovered before that jeering crowd.

But the executioner was obliged to obey the command which had been given. With one quick gesture he tore open her white robe and loosened it above her shoulders. At the same instant, as though the angel that guarded her modesty had taken pity on her shame, her magnificent hair fell in a cloud of gold about her neck, sweeping her white robe almost to the ground. Then she knelt, bending

her bright head forward to receive the stroke of the ax. It flashed one instant in the air, then that fair young head rolled upon the ground, and the body sank forward, her garments dyed crimson with the blood of the brave young martyr, whose years scarce numbered fourteen.

A lady, a Christian, among the spectators, advanced quickly, took off her rich brocaded mantle, and threw it over the body. And then a crowd of men, women, and children pressed forward, dipping sponges and linen cloths in the blood of the martyr, as was the custom, in order to preserve them as memorials. Her body was buried a short distance from Rome, on the Nomentan road. There are two churches dedicated to St. Agnes in Rome, one above the spot where she was interred and without the walls. It contains several of her relics in a very rich silver shrine, the gift of Pope Paul V.

There is another fine church dedicated to her within the walls. It was built by Pope Innocent X.

Many miracles glorified her tomb. Once, when her parents were praying there in the silence of the night, Agnes appeared to them, surrounded by light. She carried a lamp in her hand and a lamb on her arm. Many radiant virgins accompanied her. The Saint smiled and said: "Do not weep or mourn for me. Rejoice, rather, for I am now united with Jesus in Heaven—with Jesus, whom I loved above all things on earth."

After the martyrdom of St. Agnes, instead of being terrified by her fate, many persons, among them a number of young girls, came forward and died for Christ.

"The same is the greatest testimony of the truth of our religion," says Tertullian to the pagans. "And in thus exposing our Christian virgins not only to

the torture, but more often to temptation, you show that you are aware they prefer death to the loss of their purity. In this way you multiply the converts to our holy religion."

Every year in the church of St. Agnes, in Rome, on the day of her Feast, two lambs are blessed and carried to the Pope, who again blesses them. Afterwards they are sent to convents, where the nuns make palliums of the wool, which his Holiness blesses and sends to each newly created Archbishop as an emblem of the spotless purity which belongs to his high office.

The Feast of St. Agnes, celebrated on the 21st of January, is one of great devotion, not only in Rome but also in many other places. Formerly in England processions were common on that day, and it was a special holiday for women. St. Thomas à Kempis was very devoted to her;

we see allusions to St. Agnes in several of his works. St. Martin of Tours was also devout to her, and St. Ambrose and St. Austin each wrote her panegyric. Many miracles have been wrought by her intercession. Meekness and gentleness are always associated with her name.

The following legend illustrates how powerful prayer can be in removing evils of the mind as well as the body:—

In the days when England was still called "The Dowry of Our Lady," there was a famous spring, believed to be miraculous, in the duchy of Cornwall. The legend goes on to say that a blind girl, bathing her eyes in this spring on the morning of St. Agnes' Day, and invoking the aid of the Saint, was entirely cured. The spring was then called after St. Agnes, and people came from far and near to be healed.

There lived in the neighborhood a

widow with one child, a little girl, who was called Agnes. The child was very beautiful and had a most amiable disposition, but she had never spoken a single word since her birth. In every other respect she was all that a healthy and intelligent child should be. It was the custom, especially in summer time, for many persons to visit St. Agnes' Spring, and little Agnes, who could hear perfectly well, although unable to speak, had listened to the accounts of the wonderful cures obtained through the prayers of her Patroness. One day she overheard her mother say to a visitor:—

"Only I am afraid God would not be pleased with me, I would ask the cure of my poor child at the Spring. God made her as she is, and no doubt it would be presumption in me to beg that she might become like other children."

"Not so," replied the neighbor, who

was a very sensible woman. "By what you say, no one should ask to be delivered from any evil, for it is God who sends us sickness of all kinds, yet we still pray to be cured."

But the widow shook her head sorrowfully as she looked at the child, forgetting that she could hear and understand every word. From that moment Agnes was resolved to do for herself what her mother was afraid to undertake.

The next morning she rose very early and went to the Spring. Dipping both hands in the sparkling water, she drank three long draughts, at the same time raising her innocent eyes to Heaven. She had never uttered a word, but her soul pleaded to the beautiful Saint whose name she bore. She returned home, and when her mother addressed her she tried to answer, moving her tongue about in her mouth. but all in vain. For many days

Agnes repaired to the Spring, always praying in her heart, always taking the three draughts of water, always making the same effort on her return.

At last the Feast of the Assumption was at hand. Great preparations were made in the country round for the procession which usually took place on that day. Many times during her life of silence had Agnes longed to join her young companions in the hymns which they were in the habit of singing as they marched from shrine to shrine. While her mother still slept, almost before the dawn of day, she left her bed and soon found herself at St. Agnes' Spring. Stooping down, she lifted the water in her hands and placed it to her lips. "This is the last time," she thought. "If St. Agnes wishes to cure me, she will let me join the other children in their hymns. If she does not do this, I shall know

that God thinks it best for me to remain dumb."

As she swallowed the water, the child felt a strange sensation in her throat. "St. Agnes, pray for me," murmured the pure lips, and for the first time Agnes heard her own voice. Wild with delight she hastened home. Her mother had arisen and was wondering at her absence.

"Where have you been so early?" she inquired.

"To St. Agnes' Spring," answered the little girl, in clear, sweet tones, and in another moment mother and child were crying together in each other's arms. That was a happy day in the village; little Agnes walked at the head of the procession, carrying the banner of Our Lady and uniting her voice to the voices of the other children, singing the praises of the Queen of Heaven.

On one occasion a child who had just

received the Sacrament of Holy Communion for the first time, and had been confirmed the same day, was sitting on a broad window-sill in the third story of her own home. It was evening. Weary with the fatigues of the great day, she fell asleep. Suddenly she found herself falling through the air. She had that day chosen St. Agnes for her Patroness. "St. Agnes, save me!" she cried, and stretching out her hands clutched the branches of a tree, which broke her fall. Trembling and afraid, but grateful for her escape, she clung to the bough till some one came to her assistance. To this day she has never doubted that it was the lovely Saint of Rome who saved her from a dreadful death.

ST. TERESA.

ST. TERESA

IT has been said of St. Teresa that she possessed the soul of an angel, the mind of a man, and the heart of a loving and trustful child in the body of a woman. It is doubtful if she could be better described.

She was born at Avila, in Spain, on the 28th of March, 1515. Her father, Don Alphonsus Sanchez, was a rich man, and he had need of his riches, as there were nine children in the family. He had been married twice. Teresa was the child of his second wife. Both father and mother were pious people, looking carefully to the ways of their household and servants, and delighting in the reading of good books, with which they were well supplied. Thus

Teresa early formed a taste for study, and could read well when she was only seven years of age. She had a brother called Rodrigo, of whom she was very fond. He was but a little younger than herself, and together they were accustomed to read the Lives of the Saints, so we see that the youthful taste of these children was formed not on the reading of silly stories, as is often the case in these days when we are deluged with books. At that time there was very little written for children; if they had a desire to read, they were obliged to be content with what their elders enjoyed; and though such reading may have often been what we would call dry and tiresome, it caused them to be thoughtful of the things of eternity. To these two children, going about together with their books in their hands, the thought of eternity was very solemn and terrible. Yet they considered the joyful aspect of life everlasting

more than the dreadful side of it; they were guiltless of sin, too young to know its horrors, and they dwelt more often on the idea of always being permitted to be with God in Heaven.

As they walked up and down the garden with their arms about each other, they were in the habit of repeating, "Forever, forever, forever," until at last it seemed to them they could not wait for the sight of God and the joys of Heaven, but that they must hasten their journey there by becoming martyrs. They thought the torments of those who died for Christ would be nothing compared to the happiness which was their great reward. At that time Christians were being persecuted in the country of Morocco, and the children resolved to leave home secretly, to travel to the land of the Moors, and there proclaim themselves Christians. This, they hoped, would be followed by the glory of martyr-

dom. For its pains they cared naught, believing that God would sustain them by His grace. No doubt such would have been the case if they had been able to persevere in their intention, but such was not God's will.

They started out early one morning, praying as they went. But they had not gone far when, on the bridge over the river Adaja, near the town, they were met by their uncle, who said to them:—

"Where are you going all alone, my children?"

They looked at each other. They could not tell a falsehood, yet feared they would not be allowed to carry out their holy purpose should their uncle be told of it. At length Teresa bravely replied:—

"We are going to the country of the Moors, there to die for Christ."

"A very good purpose if it were necessary," said their uncle, taking a hand of

each and turning their faces back to the town. "But just at present it is better for you to live for Christ, which you cannot fail to do if you follow the counsels of your good father and mother."

The children burst into tears as they saw the martyr's crown fading in the distance. Yet they had no resource but to return with their uncle. When they reached home, they found the whole household alarmed and searching for them, who had never been permitted to leave the garden alone.

"Why, why did you run away?" cried Doña Beatrice, their mother, when she saw them.

"We wanted to be martyrs," said Teresa. "We wished to die for our faith, and go to Heaven all the sooner."

When their mother began to reproach them, Rodrigo began to cry, like his forefather in the garden of Eden, and

said, "It was Teresa who did it, not I." But Teresa said nothing. She was willing to take all the blame, thinking that he was only a very little fellow and should not be scolded.

After this, seeing that they would not be allowed to become martyrs, they decided to be hermits instead. They began to build themselves hermitages, with piles of stone, in the garden, but as fast as they put them together they fell down, not having any support or cement to fasten them together, and they were compelled to give up this project also.

Teresa's mother had given her a picture of Our Saviour talking to the Samaritan woman at the well. She loved this picture very much, and often said to Our Lord as she looked at it, in the words of the Samaritan woman, "Lord, give me of that water," meaning of His grace and love. When she was twelve years

old her mother died, and Teresa's heart was almost broken. Throwing herself on her knees before an image of the Blessed Virgin, she begged her to be her mother, adding that without her special and tender care she could not live. From that moment her grief was not so violent; the Mother of the desolate and orphan had thrown over her the mantle of peace and hope and consolation.

When Teresa was fifteen, a change came into her life. Her mother was dead, there was no watchful eye to direct her reading, which now, instead of being the Lives of the Saints, as formerly, began to consist of novels and romances. And here a word may not be amiss as to the danger of such reading. While there is no harm in moral stories, even when full of action and spirit, if one reads such tales to the exclusion of serious books, one becomes disgusted with everything ex-

cept fiction. Innocent they may be, but desirable except as a recreation they are not. When the mind is nourished on such reading, and that alone, it is very apt to pass into something worse. To use St. Teresa's own words, in writing of this period of her life, she says:—

"This fault (of reading romances) failed not to cool my good desires, and was the cause of my falling into other defects." She began to be vain, to be fond of dress, and to like to go out in company a great deal. She was at an age when children are easily impressed, and for a short time all that had once appeared to her lovely seemed now dull and tiresome. She had a cousin, a young girl about her own age, who was full of vanity, thinking of nothing but of what new gowns she would have made, what perfumes to use, how to curl her hair, and making life one round of pleasure.

When Teresa's father saw the effect of this example on his daughter, he began to feel alarmed. He could not forbid his niece to come to the house, as she was a very near relation, but he resolved to take Teresa away from her example. His daughter was reluctant to leave the companions whom she found so pleasant, but she was too obedient and loving a child to say a single word against her father's wishes. He made arrangements to place her in a convent where many young ladies were educated, and Teresa was obliged to submit.

For the first week, Teresa was very lonely and unhappy; but after that she once more began to take pleasure in holy things, and to forget the vanities which had lately seemed so sweet.

It is possible that Almighty God had wished Teresa to have that experience so that she might later be better able to

lead and have charity for others who might, like herself, be tempted by the delusions of the world. It is not to be understood by this that we are not to have any diversion or pleasure, or to wear fine clothes, if we can afford to do so. What we must remember is that our lives should not be devoted entirely to amusement, nor even the greater portion of them. They are best and happiest who fill up their days and hours with that work to which their state of life ordains them, and thus enjoy their moments of leisure as no idlers can.

Teresa soon became very fond of a devout nun, who was in the habit of often repeating these words of Our Lord, "*Many are called, but few are chosen.*" At this time Teresa had no idea of becoming a religious; on the contrary, the thought of spending her life in the convent frightened her. She could have gone forth

with a song on her lips to be a martyr; but she did not understand how it was possible to live forever between four gloomy walls, deprived of any intercourse with the outside world. We have her own words for this.

Neither are all women called to be nuns. It is a great mistake to have a fear of being pious, lest one should thereby be obliged to enter a convent. Good women are needed in the world, and pious women. If it were not for the piety of wives, mothers, and sisters, there would be a great deal more evil in it than there is, although we all know there is already too much.

There is a piety which, according to the Apostle, is "cheerful and kind," not long-faced and gloomy. Such piety is the same whether seen within the cloister or beside the domestic hearth. It is the piety by which all good women are known, though all are not Saint Teresas.

After her return home she had no peace of mind, because she felt it her duty to become a religious, and the love of her own liberty prevented her from doing so. She had a very strong will and feared that she might not be able to keep the rules of a convent. But at length she came to a decision and entered a Carmelite Convent, where she made her profession in the twentieth year of her age. A little while after this she became very ill, this illness being accompanied by great sadness of soul. God wished to try her in every way. She had a sincere devotion to St. Joseph and believed that her cure was due to him.

At the end of three years, Teresa, whose kindness to all and great spirit of charity endeared her to all her companions, began to take pleasure in the visits of friends and acquaintances, who often came to the convent.

Although as a Carmelite she could see her friends only from behind a grating, she was permitted to receive as many visitors as she liked. This was her greatest temptation, but after some time had elapsed she began to see that it would have been far better to remain in her father's house than to be a worldly nun, and she at once renounced her custom of receiving visitors. Her confessor had advised her to recite the *Veni Creator* every day, and once, while thus employed, she heard a voice which said to her, "Teresa, I will not have thee hold converse with men, but with angels."

It fell to the lot of Teresa to change the spirit, not only of her own convent, but also that of others of the same Order. They were all too worldly, and it was through her great virtue and zeal that they again resumed that spirit of piety which belongs to all true religious. A

desire most perfectly to obey God in all things moved her to make a vow never to commit a venial sin. She was very humble; although Superior, it was her greatest pleasure to perform the humblest offices.

St. Teresa founded sixteen convents of women, besides fourteen convents of Carmelite friars. The means of doing these things sometimes were lacking, but Teresa always found them when they were needed. On these occasions it was her custom to say that God would provide, and he always did. When she began her great convent at Toledo, she had only five ducats in her purse. But she said, "Teresa and this money are indeed nothing, but God, Teresa, and these ducats will suffice for the accomplishment of the undertaking."

We have seen in the beginning of this history that St. Teresa from her earliest

childhood had a great desire to die for Christ. She was not permitted to die by the sword, or through any other means by which the crown of martyrdom is gained, but during her long life of nearly seventy years she endured many martyrdoms. Suffering, sickness, persecution, opposition — all were showered upon her. And while she accepted and endured these great trials with wonderful patience and humility, she still cherished the desire for death: the longing which had filled her youthful heart to be dissolved in the bosom of Christ, her Lord, in order to taste the supreme joys of Heaven. Towards the end of her life, while waiting for the Angel to lead her by the hand to that eternal country for which her soul had always yearned, her spirit expressed itself in some such words as these, taken from her biography: —

"Let me to Thy bosom fly,
Let me slumber on Thy breast,
Let me close mine eyes in death,
Pathway to eternal rest!
Through the shadows o'er me cast,
Through the shadows yet to be,
Let the ladder of my song
Climb to all eternity.

"Note by note, its silver bars
May my soul in love ascend,
Till I reach the highest round,
In Thy kingdom without end;
Nor impatient shall I be,
Though I lift my voice and cry,
Now at length the hour is come,
Let me die, Lord, let me die!

"*Miserere!* I have sinned,
But a sorrowing, contrite heart
Never didst Thou, Lord, despise.
Cleanse, O cleanse ere I depart
Every thought and word of mine,
Every tear and every sigh.
Tell me that the hour is here,
Let me die, Lord, let me die!"

St. Teresa was buried at Alba, where, in 1586, her body was found uncorrupt

and of as fresh and natural a color as on the day she died. Many miracles have been wrought through her intercession, and her relics have been the means by which God has allowed wonderful cures to be performed. She is venerated in all lands; there is no Christian country in which the name of Teresa is not almost as popular as that of Mary.

Spanish chroniclers tell many interesting stories of the protection of St. Teresa. There is a quaint little story of a young girl who lived in a village not far from Avila, where St. Teresa had her principal convent. This girl, also named Teresa, was an orphan; from her earliest youth she had been accustomed to pray daily to her Patron saint. She had been left without parents when young; the Sisters had taken her into the convent, where she had been a favorite; but when she reached the age of eighteen, she became

dissatisfied and wished to leave them. As she was not a religious, she was at liberty to do so.

"But what will you do when you go away, Teresa?" asked the Prioress.

"I shall be a servant in some rich family," was the reply. "I wish to go to a large city, where I can see the world."

"Very well, I will try to have you placed in some good family, where you will be well taken care of."

The young girl, fearing that the Prioress would send her to people who would keep her as strictly housed as she had been in the convent, said nothing; but in the middle of the night she got up, stole out of the monastery and walked to the city, with only the clothes she had on her back, and empty pockets.

At the gate of the city she was met by an old woman, who invited her to come home with her, promising to lodge her

free of charge until she could find a situation. The innocent girl, whose greatest faults were a little vanity and the desire of amusement, went with her cheerfully. But when she came to the house of the old woman, she found there several other girls, dressed in gaudy finery, whose ways and conversation she did not at all like. Very soon she found that she had fallen into a den of thieves. The woman would not allow her to leave, but locked her up in a room without food until she nearly died of hunger and cold. On the third day the woman came to her and said: "There is an old man living in the attic next to this who is a miser. Every night he counts his money. He has piles and piles of it. To-night I want you to hide under the window, which is next to yours, and watch him while he counts it. He will never suspect that any one is watching him from the roof. You can

tell me where he puts it after he has finished counting it, and to-morrow, while he is away, you can steal it. I will give you some of it, and you may go your way. If you do not obey me, I will cut your head off and throw your body into the moat."

The poor girl, terrified almost to death, promised to do as the old woman commanded. Night came, they brought her some milk and bread, which she ate; and at the hour appointed she climbed out of her window and crouched under that of the room where the old man lived. There he was, counting his money. It lay before him on the table. There were gold and silver pieces and some coppers. Suddenly he clasped his hands together, looked towards the window, and said three times, "Teresa, Teresa, Teresa!"

"Yes, it is I," cried the poor girl. "It is I. Take me, send me to jail, kill me

if you wish, but I swear to you that when the moment came, I could not have taken your money; I would have died first."

Amazed, the old man went nearer the window, took Teresa by the hand, and bade her come into the room, asking how she had been able to climb on the roof. He thought her a crazy person who had escaped from the keepers. But she told him the whole story without concealing anything.

"And now, sir," she continued, "will you tell me, before you send me to prison, how you knew my name was Teresa?"

"I did not know it," he replied. "My wife's name was Teresa. I have been saving my money to buy a statue of St. Teresa for the church in the village where I was born. To-day I received a legacy which will make me comfortable for the rest of my life. I am going home to my

village. I was longing for my dead wife, that she might share it, and I called her name."

"Where is your village?" asked Teresa. He named it, and it was her own.

Together they gave thanks to St. Teresa, to whom they both believed the girl's preservation was due. The old man took her to a decent lodging for the night, and next morning they went back to their old home. Teresa lived with the good old man until he died, having seen enough of the great world in which she had longed to live. And you may be sure that St. Teresa was honored more than ever in that village when the story of her namesake and the statue which adorned the altar soon became known.

The protection of no other saint, perhaps, is more efficacious for the young against the dangers of worldliness and frivolity than that of St. Teresa. This

must be so, for who better than she understands the attractions and allurements of the "pride of life"?—she who so valiantly rose above them to the rarer, purer atmosphere of renunciation and sanctity. There is no strong, insistent inclination of the human heart, particularly the youthful heart, she did not feel — all those unreasoning, violent emotions and desires that compass the ruin of so many young men and young women. Through the grace of God and an earnest longing for the right, she was enabled to overcome her temptations to worldliness and to make them the stepping-stones to sanctity.

ST. ROSE OF LIMA

EVEN in these days of rapid transit a journey from South America to Europe occupies a good deal of time. In the days in which St. Rose of Lima exalted the fame of her country, especially the city of her birth, which is the capital of Peru, months were occupied in such a voyage. Great, indeed, then, must have been the sanctity of her, the first canonized saint of the New World, to have reached the ears of those concerned in such matters, across mountains and valleys, wastes and prairies, rivers and oceans, till all Catholic Christendom united in placing her glorious crown on this "first flow'ret of the desert wild."

St. Rose was born on the 20th of April,

in the year 1586. Her parents were rich people at the time, though later they lost their fortune. She was named Isabel, but was such a beautiful infant that, as she lay in her cradle, people were wont to say that her face resembled a beautiful rose. Thus it was that she received the lovely title by which she has always been distinguished.

From the very beginning of her life she was known as an extraordinary child. She was one of those souls chosen by Almighty God to manifest His glory as He sometimes condescends to do in the souls of His creatures. Miracles and wonders surrounded her infancy and childhood. It is said that while an infant a delicate, fragrant rose was seen hovering in the air above her sweet, pure face, which had already been likened to that flower of all flowers.

As soon as she could speak she began

to pray, and loved prayer better than anything else in the world. She never forgot the presence of God, who, her pious mother told her, could see all she did, reading even her very thoughts, and thus in all her actions she raised her heart to Him. Even in her sleep she could often be heard repeating: "May Jesus be with me. Blessed be Jesus."

Her beauty increased with years, and persons were in the habit of alluding to it in her presence, and also of telling her that she was pretty, graceful, and attractive. This distressed Rose very much; being a sensible child, she knew that what they said was true; but she was so humble that when she learned why the name of Rose had been given her she began to wish it had not been done. Her mind filled with these thoughts, she went one day to pray in the Rosary Chapel of the Dominican Church at Lima.

"Our Mother," she prayed, "this name that they call me is not my own; it was given me as a kind of vain adornment; I do not deserve it."

But as she knelt there in the dim light of the chapel, Our Lady smiled upon her and said: "Thy name is very pleasing to the Son whom I bear in my arms; but henceforth thou shalt add mine to it, and shalt be called Rose of St. Mary. Thy soul must be a fragrant flower, consecrated to Jesus."

Rose took great pleasure in keeping this chapel in order, decorating the shrine of Our Lady with flowers, and arranging the altar and everything connected with it so exquisitely neat that it was a delight to all who visited it.

Many a time when we see neglected chapels, disorderly altars, and withered flowers disgracing the shrines they were meant to adorn, we cannot help but

wonder at the indifference and lack of piety which permits such things. What could be more fitting or more pleasing to Our Lord and His Mother than to find their images the object of the tender care and devotion of the little girls of our parishes, who can easily spare an hour or so from their studies and recreations during the week to decorate the altars of the church to which they belong?

But how seldom do children think of this. It is generally some pious old woman or a couple of Sisters from the convent whom we find adorning the altars which, with a little care and patience, could be equally well attended to by the children. This duty, which should be a pleasure, would also foster the spirit of piety in young hearts, for the gift of the fervent soul is always rewarded a hundred fold. It is not possible for everybody to have the wonderful virtues of St. Rose; but all

may try to imitate her practical devotion to our Blessed Mother, which found its best expression in the loving care with which she visited and beautified the holy place where God is always present in the Tabernacle.

In spite of her goodness, Rose was not without tendencies to certain faults. The principal of these was vanity. This was not at all strange, her beauty being so great that persons often turned in the street to look at her. She was never weary of asking God to deliver her from the temptation to admire herself, and made many mortifications because of it. One day she was starting out with other children of her own age to attend some little party, and her mother, having woven a garland of exquisite flowers, placed it lovingly upon her head. There happened to be a few thorns mingled with the roses, and our Rose, who dared not

remove the crown after her mother had told her to wear it, pressed it into her head so tightly that when she was going to bed that night her nurse could hardly remove it.

The mother of St. Rose died when the Saint was still a child, and her father married again. Her stepmother was very unkind to her. Rose was small, delicate, and not accustomed to perform any hard work; but her stepmother, while taunting her with this and comparing her with her own children, who were large and strong, obliged her to perform tasks she would never think of asking them to do. Her stepbrothers and stepsisters used to torment her in every way they could think of; but Rose never complained to her father, accepting every cross that came to her for the love of God and in memory of His blessed Passion.

One day her stepmother called her and

bade her go to the spring for water, telling her to take a very large and heavy earthen pitcher, which it was almost impossible for her to carry, especially after she had filled it. On her way home from the spring, she met one of her stepbrothers, who said, "Rose, where are you going?"

"I am going home with this pitcher of water," she replied.

"Why do you carry it so clumsily?" he inquired.

"Because it is heavy," said Rose.

"I will make it light for you, and easier to lift," rejoined the boy, giving it a sharp blow with a large stick he was carrying in his hand.

The pitcher broke into several pieces, the water spilled all over the ground, and poor Rose stood dismayed. Her stepbrother began to laugh and mock at her, but she showed no sign of anger.

"I hope mother will beat you now," said the boy. "I am sure she will."

Rose did not say a word. She knelt upon the grass, carefully placed the pieces together as they were before, made the Sign of the Cross over them, and calmly lifting the pitcher again, mended and whole, went back to the spring and refilled it.

Another time her stepmother, who had never taught her to sew, gave her a piece of linen and told her to make a shirt, threatening to punish her severely if she failed to do so. Rose meekly took the stuff from her hands and went to her own room, where she fell on her knees, asking her to whom she went in every difficulty to come to her aid. We may be certain that as she prayed Rose had not the slightest doubt that her request would be heard, for she had the perfect faith and trust which is always allied with

such sanctity as hers. If we would strive to possess this perfect faith, our prayers would be heard also; as a rule, we are apt to grow tired and despondent when they are not answered. There is a very strong and powerful declaration of Scripture which we all have heard. It is this: "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and only the violent bear it away." What does this mean? That only those who fight and struggle and pray over and over again, in the face of sin and poverty and misfortune and sickness and every ill that flesh is heir to, attain to life everlasting, which God has promised to those who are faithful.

This faith and confidence was as natural to St. Rose as the very air she breathed. Therefore, on this occasion, when her stepmother had commanded her to do a thing which seemed impossible, she knelt by the side of her bed and implored the Blessed

Mother whom she loved to come to her assistance.

Suddenly the door opened; Rose lifted her head from her hands and beheld a stately and beautiful lady, with the sweetest smile upon her lips the child had ever seen.

"What is the matter, Rose?" she asked. "You appear to be troubled."

Rose replied: "My stepmother has given me this linen to make a shirt, and as I do not sew very well, and have never been taught to make any kind of garment, I do not know how I shall do it."

Then the lady sat down, and, taking the linen from her hand, cut and sewed a shirt more beautifully and quickly than ever shirt was made before. When it was finished, she disappeared as quietly as she had entered. Rose took the garment to her stepmother, who questioned her about it, and every one who saw it

and heard the story felt sure that it was the Madonna herself who had helped the innocent child. To Rose, who did not for one moment think it was because of her own purity and goodness that her Immaculate Mother came to visit her, this circumstance brought no surprise. She had simply obtained the help she asked from the Mother who refused her nothing.

Her father, having lost his fortune, fell into a state of great distress, and Rose was obliged to enter the family of a rich man called Gonsalvo. Here she worked very hard, in the garden all day and with her needle at night, as she had learned to sew after the visit of Our Lady, and soon became very skilful. Although the labor she performed was very fatiguing, she was glad to be able to do it in order to help, with the money she earned, the family at home. Far from feeling any resentment against her unkind stepmother

and her children, Rose devoted to them and their needs every hour of her life. It was a pleasure to her, also, as a lover of quiet and solitude, to work in the garden among the flowers, alone and undisturbed, surrounded by God's most lovely gifts of color and perfume.

Here she had time to meditate, making of every task a prayer. At night, too, in her little room, while her needle flew in and out of the fabric of which she was fashioning various garments, her thoughts were all of heavenly things.

When she had been some time in this place, several of her friends began to interest themselves in her future. They thought it a pity that such a beautiful girl, who could have chosen a husband from among the great ones of the land, should not marry. But Rose, who from her earliest childhood had consecrated herself to God, refused to entertain the idea.

She had always ardently desired to be a Dominican, but there was no Order of these religious in Lima, where she lived. The Spanish government would not permit them to come to the city, as there were already so many convents there. But Rose predicted that one day the Dominicans would come to Lima, and even went so far as to indicate the locality and plan of the buildings, all of which came to pass after her death.

She joined the Tertiaries of St. Dominic, like the Third Order of St. Francis, to which people living in the world belong, and after she had done this occupied a little house or cell in the garden, where she lived apart from the rest of the household.

From this time forward she used such frightful means of mortifying her innocent body that the modern Christian must shrink from the very mention of

them. She had seldom sinned, and then so slightly that her failings could hardly be called venial; but she thought herself to be the meanest of human beings, and offered herself, moreover, as a sacrifice for the sins of others who constantly offended God without having even the desire to repent. She had never been strong, and as the years passed there was no portion of her body in which she did not suffer torment, but she still cried out, "O Lord, increase my pains, but increase also the flame of love in my heart."

One night Rose had a most beautiful and wonderful dream. She heard a voice which said to her, "Give me thy heart," and presently she saw the figure of a man in the garb of a sculptor, who appeared to be starting on a journey. In spite of his attire, she knew the vision to be Our Lord.

"Rose," He asked, "wilt thou be My spouse?"

"I will, Lord," she replied.

Then he showed her some blocks of marble, saying, "These thou must polish and chisel while I am gone."

She awoke, fell asleep again, and the dream was continued.

Our Lord again appeared, and opening a door, He showed her a workshop, where a number of young girls were carving and polishing blocks of marble. This she understood to signify how hard it was to chisel the soul into true perfection, and the maidens thus employed were virgins like herself who had consecrated themselves to God.

Like St. Catharine of Siena, St. Rose was also mystically espoused to Our Lord. On Palm Sunday, as she was assisting in the procession, the sacristan forgot to give her a palm. Rose, in her humility,

said to herself that it was because she was unworthy to carry the sacred emblem, and when she went to pray in the Rosary Chapel, accused herself to her dear Mother of what she thought to be a fault in having felt disappointment at not having received a palm. It was then that Mary turned her eyes on the Infant in her arms, and our Saint heard the Child distinctly pronounce these words, "Rose of My Heart, be thou My spouse."

At these words, Rose prostrated herself upon the ground, exclaiming, "Thy servant am I, O Lord. I am Thine, and desire to belong to Thee alone. I will be eternally faithful to Thee, and desire to lay down my life for Thee."

For a long time she received Holy Communion every day, and that was often her only nourishment. Sometimes she passed whole weeks without taking any food. During the last year of her

life, as she was praying one night at her window, a beautiful bird came and perched on the sill. Rose began to sing a canticle, as was her nightly custom, and the bird also sang, trilling a delightful accompaniment to the hymn. From that time until the day of her death the bird appeared at the same hour, singing with her the praises of God, after which it flew away and was lost to sight amid the splendor of the brilliant southern stars. Spanish tradition has it that Rose thus responded to the song of the bird:—.

"Attune thy song, my beauteous bird,
And let thy sweetest notes be heard
In praise of God. Responsive to thy voice
I sing — He bids us both rejoice.

"Come, let us join in heavenly song
To Him to whom we both belong,
To whom we both shall faithful be,
Whose fiat made both thee and me —
He bids us twain rejoice."

Her last illness was of three weeks' duration, and in it she suffered greatly, but gave proof of the sincerity of her piety by the patience and sweetness with which she bore all her pains. Her last words were, "Jesus, Jesus, be with me."

She died on the 24th of August, 1617, but her Feast is celebrated on the 30th. Her body was laid in the church of the Dominicans, where it still rests, the most precious treasure of the great and rich city of Lima. It is said that during the funeral rays of light were seen to dart from the image of Our Lady of the Rosary. St. Rose had hardly taken her place in Heaven before crowds of persons began to visit her tomb, and many miracles were worked through her intercession. But the greatest of all these would seem to be the conversions that took place. Sinless herself from her infancy, Rose had spent her whole life praying for sinners,

suffering for them, offering up every pain of body and soul which afflicted her, that they might be touched by the grace of God and brought to repentance and salvation. If anything were necessary to proclaim her sanctity, the events that followed her death would have done so, without any other form of miracles. The confessionals were thronged with people; men and women who had not been seen at the altar for years now became fervent Catholics; and a number of rich persons who had led careless or wicked lives began to perform works of charity, giving large sums to the poor, founding hospitals, and waiting upon the sick with their own hands.

Many who had given great scandal were now as eager to humble and mortify themselves as before they had been at a loss where to find new causes of sin and evil pleasures.

This took place not only in Lima, but in all that part of the world then known as New Spain, as it was still under the dominion of the Spanish kings.

St. Rose of Lima was canonized in 1671 and was made Patroness of America and the Philippines.

It may be here noted, as an interesting fact, that the Filipinos, who, a few short years ago were almost unknown to the people of the United States, have the same special Patronesses as ourselves, viz., the Immaculate Mother of God, known in the Islands as Our Lady of Antipolo, and St. Rose of Lima, whom we honor as the first saintly flower of America.

In reflecting on the life of St. Rose of Lima, it is well to remember that her whole earthly existence was an instance of self-sacrifice. Everything she did was with the intention of always doing God's

will, in her work, her meals, her rest, her recreation. She studied, as we all should do, to be helpful, humble, pious, and faithful to every duty.

To kill pride and vanity in herself was her one great aim. She possessed all that usually puffs up with pride — beauty of body, grace, intelligence. But over and above all these, she possessed the greatest beauty of all, a deep spiritual love for God and heavenly things, which showed her how mean and small in comparison are the things admired of men. She always wore around her head a thin circlet of silver, hidden in the rich masses of her hair. This was studded on the inside with little, sharp points, like thorns, so that if she should ever have a thought of vanity, a motion of the head would cause her to feel the pricking of the metal pins, reminding her that beauty is a gift of God, and that neither from it nor any other gift we pos-

sess may we take any credit to ourselves; and although we wear no circlet of silver lined with short pins about our heads, we can bind the silver crown of humility and purity around our hearts, always mindful that the only real beauty is that of virtue and holiness.

ST. CECILIA

ST. CECILIA

THE name of St. Cecilia has always been highly honored in the Church and has been made familiar to us by pictures, which always represent her as a beautiful maiden, seated before an organ, on which she is playing; or sometimes with a wreath on her brow and a lyre in her hand. This is because she is the patroness of music and musicians. She was fond of singing psalms and pious hymns to the glory of God, a practice which might well be imitated in our own day by those to whom He has given a beautiful voice, but who, for the most part, use this great gift in the service of the world, if not of the devil.

St. Cecilia was born in Rome, of a good

family, and was educated in all the doctrines and practices of the Christian religion, from which we may judge that her family was also Christian.

In the beginning of the third century the followers of Jesus Christ were enjoying some peace. They were no longer afraid to let the world know their faith, they were not scorned and mocked, nor stoned, when they came forth from their houses. In this way their numbers increased, they were on good terms with their heathen neighbors, and were allowed to engage in business. They were also employed in government offices, as well as permitted to join the army and navy. Once in a while, however, as though Almighty God wished to keep their faith firm, by causing them to see that at any time they might be persecuted, there would be slight outbreaks against them. At the same time, it must be confessed

that many of them were not as fervent as when they had been obliged to conceal their religion and burrow in holes and caves like the wild beasts, through fear of being seized and put to death. But St. Cecilia was not numbered among this kind of Christians. Although the daughter of a noble and surrounded with all the luxuries of life, she was pious and devoted to charity from her earliest childhood.

In order that our young readers may be able to form an idea of the splendor in which the rich Romans lived, and therefore realize what great sacrifices were made by the Christians who abandoned this splendor to die for their faith, we will give them a short description of a Roman home of the first class, such as that of St. Cecilia.

From the outside one would never guess the luxury to be found within. Like the houses of the wealthy in Spain, Mexico,

and the Oriental countries in our own times, they were plain in appearance, showing only blank, dead walls, with very few windows. The mansion was generally four-sided, built around a court, in the center of which often played a fountain and where beautiful plants and flowers grew. The door in one of these blank walls opened on a marble porch, on the pavement of which was cut the word "Salve," or "Welcome," — a very beautiful compliment to the entering guest. In the middle of the court to which we now come, we find a fountain, probably rising from and falling again into a large red porphyry basin, and watering the gayly colored flowers and shrubs around it with its delicious spray. Under the roof of the portico we see rich furniture; couches inlaid with ivory and even silver; tables of scented woods, holding lamps and curiosities from many lands. On the

walls are paintings; statues in niches add beauty to the scene. Above the columns of this portico are hung large curtains, which can be let down to keep out both sun and rain. The Roman people lived out of doors as much as possible, and the ladies especially spent nearly all their time in this *atrium*, or open court.

Here, we may safely assure our readers, might usually be found the young Cecilia, richly but plainly attired, in some gown of gracefully flowing white stuff. Around her neck gleams a chain of the finest gold, narrow almost as a thread of silk, to which is attached a crucifix, sometimes openly falling on her breast, at others carefully concealed within her bosom. She would be likely to have in her hands a piece of embroidery, perhaps of gold cloth, perhaps of linen. If the former, she would from time to time lean forward to take from the elegant little caskets on the table beside

her some pearl or gem to fasten on the embroidery. If the latter, her skilful fingers would thrust the finest needle in and out through the finest meshes, at the risk of injury to her beautiful eyes. And that embroidery, whether cloth of gold or linen, in the hands of a Christian matron or maiden would most certainly be part of a chasuble or an altar-cloth or a stole or an alb or a surplice for the service of the Church.

Unlike the pagan households of the period, in this Christian home would rarely be found on exquisite little tables the jewels of which the Roman ladies had become so fond, nor would one seek there for rare cosmetics and perfumes brought from the East in richly ornamented jars and glass vials, lined and traced with gold. No, for the money that the pagan sisters spent upon their own persons, the Christian ladies gave to the poor and the sick.

As we have said before, Cecilia loved music, and it was her greatest pleasure to spend her leisure moments in singing the praises of God. She also loved solitude, for her pure young heart had long been consecrated to God, to whom she desired to give her whole life and all the good she might be able to do, until her Spouse should call her to the enjoyment of heaven. But her parents had other views for her, as the best of parents have had, and will have, as long as time shall last. Many suitors came begging for her hand, and finally her father and mother decided that Cecilia should marry a rich young nobleman called Valerian.

Almighty God must have given the Saint some knowledge of what was to follow, for she obeyed her parents without resistance. As soon as the wedding-guests had departed and the new husband and wife were left alone, Valerian felt an awe

steal over his heart and soul; his wife seemed to him like an angel from heaven, while a serene joy and peace descended upon his spirit. Cecilia then told him of her vow, at the same time explaining the doctrines of Christianity. He at once asked to be baptized, and soon became as fervent a Christian as his angelic bride.

It is said that they went together to Pope Urban himself, who, to escape the persecution which had already begun after so long a period of peace, was hiding in the Catacombs. The Pope baptized Valerian, and the sun had scarcely set upon their wedding-day till these fervent young Christians were ready for the martyr's crown.

All burning with zeal, Valerian immediately began to explain his new faith to his brother, Tiburtius, whom he tenderly loved. Cecilia joined with her husband, and Tiburtius was soon on his way to

Pope Urban, who baptized him also. There were now three brave soldiers of Christ prepared to enter the arena to be slain by the lions, or to meet any death which would assure them the path of the martyr.

Valerian and Tiburtius began works of charity which were sooner or later likely to bring them to the notice of their enemies among that class of pagans who were eager for the death of every follower of Christ.

They went about giving alms both of money and clothing in places where Cecilia could not go, though at home she was not idle, but making garments and preparing, with her faithful servants, food for the destitute poor. Her husband and his brother fearlessly went also to visit the prisons, where they strengthened and consoled their brethren.

As was to be expected Almachius, the prefect of Rome and an enemy of the

Christians, soon heard of their labors and ordered them to be brought before him.

"Why?" he inquired, as they stood side by side in the tribune, "why have you forsaken the faith of your ancestors for this new religion?"

"Because," answered Valerian, "we were shown by a divine light that we had been in error."

"Why have you renounced your high position in the world to mingle with beggars and ignorant persons?"

"Because," again answered Valerian, "we have found that the world is nothing but vanity and that it is only folly to lose eternal happiness for earthly pleasures!"

Then Almachius, angry at the words of Valerian, ordered him and Tiburtius to be beaten with rods, but nothing could shake their constancy. He therefore confided them to the care of Maximin, an officer, who took them to the Temple of Jupiter

to force them to sacrifice to the gods. If they refused to do this, the prefect had ordered them to be put to death. When Maximin found them firm in their refusal, knowing what they might expect, he could not understand the joy that shone on their faces.

"Why are you so happy in the face of death?" he inquired.

"Because we hope to enter soon into eternal life."

"Do you believe that man lives after death?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Tiburtius, "death does not end all."

Then he went on to explain what the Christians believed, with such eloquence that Maximin was deeply impressed by his words. God touched his heart, and he cried out, "I too will be a Christian." He put off the execution of the young men that he might be instructed, and that night

went to Cecilia, who prepared him for baptism and martyrdom. The next day Valerian and Tiburtius were beheaded. Maximin, standing beside them, cried out, "O fortunate martyrs, who can see your triumph as I see it! Oh, what would I not give to share your happiness!"

Almachius, in a fury, ordered him to be executed, which was done.

After the death of these three, Cecilia sold all her goods, in order to give the proceeds to the poor, as she knew her turn would soon arrive. Almachius lost no time in having her arrested. Her friends among the pagans besought her to sacrifice to the idols. But Cecilia shook her head.

"Do you not know," she said, "that nothing will make me so happy as to die for Christ?"

Then she continued speaking, explaining the Christian doctrine, till, like St. Peter and St. Paul before their accusers, she con-

verted a number of persons who had come to attend her trial. These also she conveyed secretly to Pope Urban, who instructed and baptized them.

Almachius, struck by her beauty, was loth to see her die. He caused her to be brought before him once more and said to her:

"Thou art too clever and too lovely to die. I can not bear to sentence thee. But unless thou wilt offer a libation to the gods of Rome, the gods of thy fathers, I must needs do so."

"That I shall never do," she rejoined. "I can not be false to my own God, the one true and only Ruler of the world."

"Even so, I would fain release thee, but that thou hast persuaded by thy words so many of my people to join thee," continued the prefect.

"Death is what I crave!" cried Cecilia. "I wish to enter upon the joys of heaven,

where I shall find again my martyred Spouse."

"Obey me, or thou shalt suffer!" exclaimed Almachius.

"Not to adore the gods of Rome is the only crime of the Christians," said Cecilia. "For that they are condemned to death. And yet Romans boast that they are free!"

"That is treason!" cried Almachius, all his former pity changed to anger. "Do you presume to disobey the Emperor?"

"I prefer to obey God!" answered Cecilia.

Transported with rage, the prefect ordered that she should be taken back to prison and put into a furnace until she should be smothered.

Cecilia endured the torture with fortitude, but did not die, as the tyrant expected. The prefect, surprised that she was not stifled, commanded the execu-

tioner to cut off her head. The man, who had beheaded hundreds, lost his courage when it came to the turn of the noble Roman matron. No doubt his heart was filled with compassion, and so his hand wavered. Instead of giving a clean, bold stroke, he bungled, and only cut through part of the neck. Twice he essayed it, and as the Roman law gave freedom to any criminal who should fail to have his head severed at the third blow, he left the martyr all mutilated and bathed in her blood. Cecilia, happy at being allowed to shed her blood drop by drop for the God whom she adored, asked of Him the grace to live three days longer, in order to instruct the new converts, who surrounded her as she lay bleeding on the ground. This favor was granted her. She was removed to the humble abode of some Christians; and after having encouraged the hearts of her friends by her sublime

discourse, she died on the third day, as she had desired. As her pure soul passed to that heaven for which she had so ardently longed, the Christians assembled around her believed that they heard the voices of the angels, conducting her to paradise, chanting the praises of their King.

The sacred bodies of the martyrs Cecilia, Valerian, Tiburtius, and Maximin were placed in a portion of the cemetery of St. Calixtus, which was then called the cemetery of St. Cecilia. There was a church of St. Cecilia in Rome as early as the fifth century. This church being fallen to decay, Pope Paschal I. began to rebuild it, but he did not know where to look for the body of the Saint, as he thought the Lombards had taken it away in 755, as they had others. One Sunday as he was assisting at Matins, he fell asleep and dreamed that St. Cecilia came to him and told him that

the Lombards had sought for her body in vain, and that it was still in the cemetery which bears her name. When he awoke he went as soon as possible to the place described, and found the body, clothed in a garment of gold-embroidered gauze. At her feet were linen cloths dipped in her blood. With her body was found that of Valerian, her husband. This, with those of Tiburtius and Maximin, was also taken to the church.

There are now three churches in Rome dedicated to St. Cecilia. Her feast is kept on the 22nd of November, the day of her martyrdom.

The following story, which is strictly true, came under the notice of the writer many years ago. It serves to show the fact, long since established in the hearts of Christians, that the Saints are ever ready and privileged to hear and help those who invoke their aid.

An Italian gentleman, son of a general, and himself an army officer, had led a careless, if not evil life, and so lost his faith. Having quarreled with a brother officer, a duel was fought between them. The duel resulted so that the young man, fearful that he had wounded his former friend unto death and dreading arrest and disgrace, fled to America. He was an artist of ability as well as a musician. In the United States he went one Sunday to High Mass in a large city, and while there heard a marvelous voice in the choir. He soon learned that it belonged to a young girl, the daughter of the organist, and he sought an introduction to her. After a short time they were married. The young wife did all in her power to persuade her husband to return to the practice of his religion. But she did not succeed. He was a model in every other way, but said that he could no longer believe. The

pious woman did not despair, but offered her whole life for his conversion. Her name was Cecilia. One day while visiting a monastery famous for its fine paintings the young Italian saw a beautiful picture of St. Cecilia, which he asked permission to copy, in order to give it as a birthday gift to his wife. The permission was given, and he set to work, going daily to his task. Before he began the picture, as he was placing the canvas on the easel, he looked up at the old painting with a smile, and said, half aloud: "O gentle lady and noble Christian heroine, if there is a God above and thou hast any power in heaven, help me to make this work worthy of her for whom it is intended, and of thee."

The picture grew under his hand, and as it grew he loved it more and more. The gentle eyes, the sweet but heroic mouth, the beautiful hands, sweeping the

lyre, all seemed to him to breathe of heaven. Almost he could fancy that those eyes smiled upon him, that those lips were about to speak to him, that he could hear the flutter of the angels' wings on which that martyr's soul had been borne to the gardens of paradise. And then there came a day when, the picture nearly completed, he felt the hand of grace touching his soul, and he saw the truth, not as through a glass, darkly, but with the eyes of faith, distinct and clear. He gave the last touches to his work, took the canvas from the frame, and went to the monks to show it to them. They all gathered about him; they had been praying for him, no doubt, and when he told them what had happened they were glad, if not as surprised as he had expected. We can imagine the joy of the young wife when he gave her the painting and told her what it had done for him.

But God, who never bestows joy without demanding a sacrifice of some kind, either here or hereafter, was soon to try the faith and virtue of the penitent man. For a few short months he enjoyed the new happiness which the prayers of his good wife and her patroness, St. Cecilia, had obtained for him. Then one of his two beautiful children, a boy and a girl, sickened and died. She too was named Cecilia, and the Saint wanted her pure innocent soul for heaven. Hardly had the sorrowing parents dried their tears when the boy followed his sister. Then the mother grew pale and thin and fell into a slow decline. At the end of a year she went to join her children before the throne of God. The heartbroken husband did not reproach God for these misfortunes. His conversion had been too sincere and complete for that. Instead, he presented the picture he had painted to

a convent where there was a chapel dedicated to St. Cecilia, which his wife had often visited during her life. Then he became a monk of La Trappe, where he lived for many years, and not long since died a holy death.

There is an incident related of a young girl who had a great talent for music and was the owner of a glorious voice. She was the child of virtuous parents, had been well instructed, and, up to the time of the death of her father and mother, had been sheltered in a Christian home. But when they died she was obliged to support herself, and some one, having discovered that she sang beautifully, offered to send her to the Conservatory in Milan. For four years she went there, improving her voice, but losing her piety. Gradually she left off going to Mass and seldom said a prayer. After her studies were completed she began to sing in Opera and at pri-

concerts in the houses of the wealthy. Finally, she went to Rome, in the company of some other noted singers, and received high praise and much money for her beautiful singing.

She had in earlier days been devoted to St. Cecilia, and on the feast, which is celebrated with great pomp in the Church of Trastevere, went to hear the music. While there she became filled with remorse for her careless life and begged the Saint to make her a good Christian once more. But after she had left the church and was again among her frivolous friends and companions, she forgot her good intentions, and led her usual life. But the voice of St. Cecilia was always in her ears. Something impelled her again and again to the church, where she would make promises only to be broken on her return. This was the more to be deplored as she was at that time tempted to go away with

a young Italian nobleman, whom her voice had charmed. At last one day, just as she was on the point of yielding, she fled to the Church of St. Cecilia.

"Save me from myself!" she cried, "Thou who did'st die for Christ!"

Then she left the church, feeling comforted. It was raining now and she caught cold. The next morning she awoke to find that she had lost her voice. At first she was in despair; but after a while began to realize that it was a blessing, one which she attributed to St. Cecilia. Her false friends deserted her, and she was obliged to give music-lessons for her living, instead of charming great audiences with her voice. She became once more a fervent Catholic, and never ceased to give thanks to St. Cecilia, her patroness and guide.

ST. HELENA

ST. HELENA

THE city of Colchester lies in what is probably the most Protestant district of all England. And yet the most prominent object in that Protestant city is an immense statue of a saint holding a cross. That statue is of St. Helena, and as the city is on a hill, and the tower on which the statue stands rises from its summit, the figure of St. Helena can be seen for many a mile over the surrounding country. Here she was born, and here she married the Roman commander who was to be the father of the first Christian Emperor.

At the close of the third century, when the Roman Empire had grown so vast as to include nearly all of the then known

world, there were two Roman Emperors, one of the East, the other of the West. The Western Emperor was named Constantius, a brave soldier, nobly born and without vices, which was rare among men of that day. While still a young man, he had been sent to Britain, then called Albion, to that portion of it known as East Anglia. His camp was pitched near the present city of Colchester, where many Roman relics may yet be found. At that time, though subject to Rome, this part of the country was still ruled by a native prince, King Coel.

Some historians say that St. Helena was the daughter of the King. One of them, an Englishman, writes, "She surpassed all the ladies of the court in beauty, as she did all the others of her time by her skill in music and the arts." It seems probable that she was a princess, as it would have been an easy thing for so

famous a captain as Constantius to have obtained her for a wife.

On the other side, there have been many to declare that she was the daughter of an innkeeper. This may also have been true. If so, the wise Constantius was no doubt captivated by her dignity and modesty. In reply to some who made light of her humble origin — if humble it was — St. Ambrose has written:

"They say she was at first a *stabularia*, or one who entertains strangers. . . . A good *stabularia*, who so devoutly sought the manger of the Lord! A good *stabularia*, who remembered and healed the wounds of him who was wounded by robbers! A good *stabularia*, who loved to be considered as nothing, that she might win Christ. Therefore Christ raised her from the dung-hill to the kingdom!"

By this the great Saint meant to reprove those who in a spirit of false pride

feel and express their contempt for the lowly-born, and feign to believe that unless a man or woman is born to honors and riches they are objects of scorn to their more fortunate brethren. How is it possible that these scoffers forget the humble birth of the Saviour of mankind? St. Joseph was a carpenter. Jesus followed that trade until He went forth at the age of thirty to preach the Gospel. The apostles were nearly all fishermen, yet Christ chose them before all others to be His friends, companions, and followers, and to spread His Gospel after He should have ascended to heaven. Virtue is more often found among the poor and genius among the lowly than in the palaces of kings.

After she had been married some length of time, and when her son Constantine was nearly grown, her husband was appointed Emperor of the Western half of the empire by the Emperor of Rome, who was at

that time Maximus, a fierce and brutal man. But this honor brought with it great sorrow, at least to Helena. Maximus commanded Constantius to divorce his wife and marry Theodora, a relative of the tyrant of Rome. We do not know whether it was the love of power which caused Constantius to obey this order, or whether he feared to resist the Emperor. What we do know is that he sent Helena away and married Theodora, at the same time keeping his son Constantine with him at his court.

Soon after this, Maximus died, and Diocletian, who succeeded him, sent an order to Constantius that be must bring his young son to Rome. The new Emperor thought by this means to insure the fidelity of Constantius, who knew that if he failed in any respect toward his colleague, Diocletian could punish him by putting his beloved son to death in revenge.

Constantius parted with his son, and the boy, after he had been some time in Rome, begged to be allowed to go back to his father. This was upon the death of Diocletian, who was succeeded by Galerius. The new Emperor refused the request. He was jealous of the young man, who was beloved by all. He sent him on dangerous missions, hoping he would be killed, but Constantine returned safely on every occasion. At last, thinking that it might be less dangerous to have him away than at the imperial court of Rome, he permitted him to go. He had hardly arrived at York, where his father was, than Constantius died, and Constantine was at once proclaimed Emperor of the West.

During all these years we hear nothing of St. Helena, but it is likely she remained as near her son as possible. We can fancy her following him to Rome, keeping near

him, and seeing him as often as she found it prudent. We can also believe that she retraced her steps to Britain as soon as he had been proclaimed Emperor. And we have proof that wherever that devoted mother may have been during this time, Constantine never lost sight of her, never failed in love and duty toward her, for as soon as he was made Emperor, he proclaimed Helena Empress. He was now thirty years old.

Galerius having appointed Licinius, a Roman officer, to rule with him in Rome, that Emperor at once made war on Constantine, of whom he was very jealous. Their armies came together near the bridge Milvius, now called Ponte Mole, two miles from Rome.

About that time there had been dreadful persecutions of the Christians by the Roman emperors, with the single exception of Constantine. He was too brave and noble

a man to persecute those who showed the nobility of their belief by the purity and sincerity of their lives. And God rewarded his virtue.

The army of Licinius outnumbered by far that of Constantine, but the son of Helena earnestly begged the protection of the one supreme God. After his prayer about noon, when the sky was bright with the light of the sun, than which nothing earthly is more brilliant, he saw in the heavens a cross of dazzling light; on it were traced these words, "In this sign thou shalt conquer." He was greatly impressed, and that night he had a vision, in which Christ appeared to him, ordered him to make a representation of the cross he had seen, and use it for an ensign in battle. The next day he defeated his enemy. The Senate caused an arch of triumph to be erected to him in Rome, which arch is still to be seen. After this

miraculous occurrence the Emperor became a Christian.

It was not until some time later that Helena followed her son. She was already advanced in years, but as soon as the waters of Baptism had fallen on her brow, she began all the heroic practices which caused all but their greatest enemies to say that the followers of Christ were a people distinguished above all the rest by their virtues. There was never a day on which the Empress did not assist at Mass, and give liberally of alms to the distressed. She always wore the plainest garments at church, in order not to scandalize the poor by the splendor of her attire. She built many churches, and endeavored to spread Christianity by every means in her power.

It was in the reign of the Emperor Constantine that the first Council of Nice was held, in 325. In the following year

he conceived the idea of building a church on Mount Calvary. He wished by this means to honor the spot where Christ was crucified and his cross raised, only to be jeered at and despised by the multitude; that sign of redemption which had appeared to the brave Emperor in the heavens, and by which he had conquered and been converted. This pious purpose filled the soul of Helena with joy; she longed to see the spot where her Lord had lived, suffered, and died; and although between seventy-five and eighty years of age, she made ready to accompany the expedition. There are many theories as to her motive. Some think she had no intention of searching for the true cross until after she had reached Jerusalem; though others believe that she was told to do so in a vision. It is natural to suppose that so holy a person would have had a desire to search for the cross on

which Our Saviour died, especially as she had all the means necessary for that purpose.

We are told that when she reached Jerusalem, toward which she traveled in great state, as befitted the mother of the Emperor, she was received with honor by the Bishop and all the Christians, and that very soon after she began her search for the cross on which Christ had died for man. We can imagine the feelings with which St. Helena, at the head of those who were to assist her in the search, set out for the famous hill of Calvary. She probably went by that road which is still called "The Way of Sorrow," crossing the lower town, and then rising in a rather steep slope up to the Gate of Ephraim. At this point the city walls formed an angle; and the three-cornered inclosure is about twenty yards outside the walls. It was called Calvary, which means "the

place of a skull," because it resembled a skull in shape.

On the top of the mountain the Empress found the ruins of a temple to the goddess Venus, which the pagans had built there, because they wished to insult as grossly as possible the God of the Christians, whom they hated. But the worship of the false goddess was held there no longer; the temple was but a mass of crumbling walls. They set to work with spades and mattocks, the Empress standing by, and we may suppose that this work required several days before the ruins could be cleared away. After this had been done, the earth was left bare, but nothing else was to be seen. This was not strange, however, as nearly four hundred years had passed since that dreadful day on Calvary when Christ was nailed to the cross; the shifting soil had long since piled itself upon the sacred spot. The Empress was

not discouraged; she bade the men dig deeper, and still deeper, knowing that besides the accumulation of earth, it was the custom of the executioners sometimes to bury their instruments in the ground, many feet below the surface.

They went on with their work, in silence, with many an inward prayer. At last the spades began to strike against some hard substances, and in a few moments there lay before them not *one* cross alone, but three, proving beyond a doubt to the minds of the searchers that they had found not only the cross on which Christ had hung for three mortal hours before His death, but also those of the two thieves, who had been executed with Him. Can any greater joy be imagined than that which must have filled the soul of the pious Empress when she first gazed upon the priceless relic? But now came the difficulty of determining

which of the three was the one on which the sacred body of Our Lord had been nailed! It was at this time that the Bishop, Macarius, a wise and holy man, suggested that they take the crosses to the house of a very rich lady who was lying at the point of death in the city, and God would show them which was the cross of Jesus. They went to her house, the Bishop prayed aloud, and touched the sick woman with the crosses. When the true cross touched her she instantly recovered.

Part of the cross the Empress left in Jerusalem, encased in a silver shrine; the rest she sent to her son Constantine. The remainder was divided into small fragments which were then, and later, distributed to various churches throughout the world.

We are told that one of the nails of the true cross was set in the crown of the Emperor, which thereafter came to be

known as the Iron Crown; a second was placed in his bridle; and a third thrown into the waters of the Adriatic Sea by the Empress Helena, during a fearful storm which took place while she was returning from the Holy Land.

St. Helena built a beautiful church on Mount Calvary, and another on the Mount of Olives, adorning them and furnishing everything necessary for offering the holy sacrifice of the Mass. She also built a convent in Jerusalem. She had so great a respect for persons who had consecrated themselves to Almighty God that she felt it a high honor to be allowed to wait upon them, calling herself "the servant of the handmaids of Christ."

The poor and the sick were always her especial care; she was interested in the soldiers, no doubt because her early life had been passed in camps, and she was very anxious always to instruct and have

these persons baptized. She was also greatly concerned with bettering the condition of galley slaves and miners. She was once traveling in the East in all the pomp of her high estate, when the caravan was obliged to stop for the night near a mine where an accident had occurred that day. The injured men, and there were several, lay suffering in small tents made of strips of canvas hung on a couple of poles, to protect them from the heat of the sun by day and the falling dews at night. The Empress lay awake in her luxurious tent, listening to the groans of the suffering men that came to her through the silence of the night. At length a moan more intense than all the rest made her cast aside the covering, rise from her couch, slip her feet into sandals, and throw a warm robe about her shoulders. Then, taking some cool water, flavored with limes, from a jar, she bent her steps to the place from which the

sounds had come. She found an old man, who, parched with thirst, was lying helpless on the ground. Placing the draught to his lips, she permitted him to drink his fill. Then she bathed his brow with some of the water that was left, and soon he was asleep.

The next morning, feeling much better, he said to the person who was waiting on him:

"In my youth I was a Christian, but I have led an evil life and so have fallen away. But last night I had a vision, or the Mother of my Lord came to me, I know not which, and now I would like to make my peace with God."

"Of what manner was your vision?" asked the attendant.

"While I moaned in my agony of pain and thirst, there came a lady to my bedside, of most majestic form and presence. She bore in her hand a crystal vase, filled

with delicious cool water, fragrant and fresh. She lifted my aching head and bade me drink, and then she bathed my face and brow. Softly she came, and softly passed; but her presence brought me sleep and rest. I am dying, and I hereby declare that though no priest may be found in this desert place to receive my last words, I ask pardon of God for my sins."

"How was the lady attired?" asked the attendant.

"She wore a heavy robe of fur, worth the ransom of a king. On her hands were jewels, and about her neck a heavy golden chain. It must have been the Mother of the Lord."

"Not so," replied the other. "It was the Empress Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine, whose heart is afflicted for the poor and suffering, her hand filled with precious gifts —"

"So?" exclaimed the dying miner. "That is even more strange. It would be a wondrous thing indeed if the Mother of my God should come to me, she that is next to divine, the succor and refuge of the poor, the lowly, and sinful. But that the mother of the greatest earthly monarch should hearken to my needs and minister unto them is still more wonderful. She came to me, a messenger of the Lord, and tell her that it is through her that poor sinful Wildomar dies praising God, a penitent and a Christian."

As a rebuke to those who insist that Catholics worship images and pay reverence to "sticks and stones," the following remark regarding the true cross may be given as proof that from the earliest times the Christians paid to it the same reverence that we do now. Lozomen, a learned man of the fourth century, writes, in connection with the finding of the cross

by St. Helena, "She adored, not the wood, but the King, Him who hung on the wood," and these are also the words of St. Ambrose.

Let us reflect here upon what must have been the great holiness of this devout Empress, to have been chosen by God to receive from the darkness where it had so long lain, the cross, once a sign of disgrace, but by His crucifixion made a symbol of glory and redemption.

It must have been, above all else, her great humility, that flower of virtues, which procured for her this favor. Like dear St. Elizabeth of Hungary, her joy was to be among the poor and suffering, and like her, the mother of Constantine was chosen to be rewarded in a special manner. She traveled in pomp and splendor, as was due her rank and the custom of the time, but her joy was in charity and sacrifice. She was surrounded by luxury, but her

greatest delight was to kneel in some church or sanctuary, by the side of the poor and lowly, for she deemed herself of no account, except in as far as she might be numbered among the children of God.

St. Helena was more than eighty years of age when she returned to Rome, wearied with much journeying, and grown feeble with age. She had hardly reached there when she became ill and was obliged to keep her bed. Feeling that her last hour had come, she sent for her son Constantine, and also her grandchildren, in order to bid them adieu. At the same time she begged the Emperor to continue in the virtuous life he was leading, to govern his kingdom with firmness, yet in the spirit of gentleness, to love justice, to temper it with mercy, to be respectful and obedient to the bishops, who represented Christ on earth, to show charity to the poor, to instruct the ignorant, to govern his own

household well and teach his children how to be humble in the midst of grandeur, how to be pious even in the courts of kings. Promising to fulfill her wishes, the Emperor received her last requests with sorrowful tears.

Constantine paid as much honor to the memory of his mother as he had given her during life. He remembered the days of his early childhood, when, amid the noise of camps, though not yet a Christian, she had taught him to be honorable, truthful, and brave. He remembered the years of his growing boyhood, when, deprived by circumstances of the place that was rightfully hers, she had shown a meek and beautiful spirit, till Providence once more placed her in her proper place.

He did not forget the beautiful example her life had given to all the world, nor the zeal which had led her to cross mountains and seas and travel over immense

deserts in order to search for and give to the world the cross of Our Saviour. He ordered her body to be placed in a beautiful urn of porphyry, the largest and richest in the world. This was deposited about three miles from the city of Rome, on the road to Palestrina, in a grand tomb. He also erected a statue to her memory, beside his own, together with a large cross in the middle of a great square in Constantinople. He also had another statue of her set up at Daphne, near Antioch.

In after years, when she had been declared a Saint, the body of the Empress Helena was removed to the famous Abbey of Hautevilliers, in France, where it long remained; but the beautiful tomb near the city of Rome was allowed to fall into ruin. The urn that once held her body is still preserved in one of the galleries of Rome. The ruins of the private baths built for her use may yet be seen and are still

known by her name. During her lifetime Constantine had medals struck in her honor, on which he caused to be inscribed her title of Empress and her name, Flavia Julia Helena.

In all history there is nothing more beautiful than the story of the tie that bound Constantine and his mother. Their names are linked as are those of St. Augustine and St. Monica.

After lying for many years in the Abbey of Hautevilliers, where many miracles took place, the remains of St. Helena were returned to Rome.

They are kept under the high altar of the Church of the Ara Cœli, where they are venerated at all times, especially on the Feast of St. Helena, the 18th of August, the day of her death.

ST. BRIDGET.

ST. BRIDGET

ST. BRIDGET, or Brigid, who, with St. Patrick, is the most honored and revered of the Irish saints, was born toward the middle of the fifth century, in the province of Leinster, in what is now the county of Louth. Her father was a powerful lord of Leinster. While she was still an infant, he saw in a dream men clad in white pouring oil upon her head; from which sign he augured truly that she was destined for great sanctity.

When a very young child, she was so charitable to the poor that she would have bestowed upon them all she had. The following story is related of her:

When she was about nine years of age, the King of Leinster gave her father a

beautiful sword, ornamented with jewels, in token of his great services in battle. The child, going about among her poor people, found her stock of provisions exhausted, so great was the distress at that time in the land. At a loss how to assist them, she came upon the great, beautiful sword hanging in her father's hall. The sunlight sparkled upon it, bringing into view the wonderful jewels with which it was ornamented.

Climbing upon a stone bench which stood beneath it, she took it down, carried it to her chamber and picked out the gems. Then she replaced the sword and sold the jewels. With the proceeds she bought food for the poor. Her father, passing through the hall, saw that the jewels had been removed and made a great outcry, thinking that some servant had stolen them. But little Bridget came forward bravely and acknowledged her fault, for

which she was severely reprimanded. Not long after this, the King paused on a journey, long enough to dine and sleep at her father's house. His eyes chanced to fall on the rifled sword, and he angrily inquired what had befallen his gift. Bridget was summoned before him. The tale was repeated; and the monarch angrily inquired:

"How darest thou thus deface the gift of a king?"

"My Lord," replied the child, "the same was bestowed upon a greater King. For what is given to the poor of Christ is given to Him also. And I would have given all my father hath, and all that you have, yea, yourselves and all, were ye in my power to give, rather than that Christ should starve." Far from being displeased, the monarch applauded her bravery and commended her charity.

Bridget was hardly more than a child

when many suitors came to ask her hand in marriage. Her father was wealthy and powerful, a great chieftain, high in favor with the King. He who should win her for his bride might count upon riches and honors, and a seat in the councils of the kingdom. But the pure and holy maiden had long since resolved to become the bride of Christ. St. Patrick had already founded many monasteries for young virgins in Ireland, to which were flocking the daughters of the greatest nobles, eager to give their virginity to the service of Heaven.

Bridget was of such a meek and quiet disposition that she feared her sense of obedience to her parents might in the end prevail upon her to accept one of the chieftains who wished to espouse her. She was very beautiful and, although entirely without vanity, could not be ignorant of the fact. She prayed therefore to Almighty

God that she might be made hideous in the eyes of men, knowing that few among them would desire a wife who was repulsive to the eyes.

The legend runs that her prayer was immediately answered; one of her eyes became dreadfully swollen, and her face so drawn to one side that she was as hideous to the eye as she had desired to be. Nothing could assuage the swelling, neither the skill of doctors nor the potent herbs of the wise women; the maiden who had been the most beautiful among the daughters of Erin, had become an object from which all turned away in disgust. The messengers who had been sent by the various chieftains to ask for the hand of Bridget, returned to their masters with the tale of her frightful deformity. After this her parents allowed her to keep the solemn vow she had made to the Lord. Taking with her three other maidens,

she went to Bishop Machaeus, a disciple of St. Patrick, who conferred the white veil upon them. As he was about to do this, he hesitated, perhaps thinking that as she was the daughter of a noble, and accustomed to luxury, her resolution might not be anything more than a temporary impulse. But a column of fire seemed at that moment to descend upon the head of the innocent maiden, and he knew that God had chosen her for His service. He therefore clothed her with the white robe of virginity and the veil of the novice, reciting over herself and her companions the prayers which had been ordained by St. Patrick to be used at the profession of Virgins. As she bent her head while receiving the white and flowing veil, her delicate fingers touched the wood of the sacred altar, on which the holy sacrifice was daily offered, when suddenly the dry wood sprouted forth into green and tender leaves, and at

the same moment, the deformity which had destroyed the loveliness of her face disappeared, the eyes resumed their former luster and sweetness, the pure white skin, no longer drawn and tense, again returned to its natural condition, and Bridget went forth from the sanctuary with her companions restored to her former beauty.

The county of Kildare gives its name to the city, which, though for centuries renowned for saints, has lost its former greatness. The ruined Cathedral, however, still shows traces of its former grandeur. There is also a "round tower," one of the highest in the kingdom, which still attracts the attention of those interested in antiquities. The bishopric of Kildare is said to have been founded by St. Conlooth, about the middle of the fifth century. Tradition says that he was assisted in his labors by St. Bridget, who built a monastery there. It derives its name from Kill, signifying

church, and Daire, which means oak, from the first foundation made by St. Bridget from a wood of oak. Her nuns were long celebrated as the guardians of what is known as "the fire of Kildare,"

"That bright light which shone in Kildare's holy fane,
And burned through long ages of darkness and storm."

A low and narrow cell, in which the fire was kept burning, is still pointed out near the ruins of the round tower. The origin of this fire has never been exactly known, though it may very well be conjectured that it was from a motive most deeply religious. The nuns were so careful to keep it supplied with fuel that it never went out through a long succession of years. It is also said, that notwithstanding this continual fire the ashes never increased.

In the year 1220 it was ordered to be quenched, by Henry de Loundres, Bishop of London, for what cause we are not told; but doubtless his reasons were good. Some writers have said that the good Bishop thought this perpetual fire resembled too greatly that of the Vestal Virgins of Rome, and that he thought it had its origin in some of the pagan superstitions that lingered long in Erin after its conversion to Christianity. However, it may well be doubted if there were grounds for this.

Under the rule of a later bishop, this fire was rekindled, and remained burning until the time of Henry the Eighth, when the monasteries were suppressed and destroyed. The cloak which is still worn by the Irish peasant woman in remote parts, and which was formerly the outer garment of all but the wealthiest classes, is supposed to be fashioned on the costume of the nuns of St. Bridget. It is very

graceful, whether made of the finest cloth as it is in the case of well-to-do persons, or of plain material, when worn by the peasantry. It is generally of a dark blue color, long and wide, covering the entire person.

There is another theory as to the reason of the perpetual fire of Kildare. It has been asserted that St. Bridget in her charity had it burning night and day, so that the poor people in the neighborhood might there find fire to light their torches, with which when carried home they could relight the fire upon the hearth, for at that time it was possible to kindle only with flint and tinder. Bishop O'Dwyer, of Limerick, wrote the following lines on the subject of St. Bridget's Fire:

Forever burns St. Bridget's fire,
Now high, now low,
But whether it decreases or mounts higher,
The ashes do not grow.

What means that burning pile ?
An emblem pure,
Of a sweet soul all innocent of guile,
That ever will endure.

Or, if a living love,
Fed by a living flame,
While great St. Bridget watches from above,
'Twill always glow the same.

St. Bridget and St. Patrick were united in a holy friendship. They frequently corresponded and it is said that she foretold the date of St. Patrick's death. She also wrote a poem in his honor.

As the years went on she became more noted for sanctity. She founded several monasteries for nuns, established schools for the instruction of the poor, and continued as in her youth to be an apostle of charity.

She died in 523, and was not only canonized after death, but declared "Patroness of Leinster." She may well be classed,

with St. Patrick, as "Patroness of All Ireland," as the Irish people are very devoted to her. There are not many families who have not a daughter bearing her name.

Such was the love her countrymen felt for her that even during her lifetime it is said that Oilioll, the son of Dunluing, then King of Leinster, being attacked by a large body of his enemies, called upon St. Bridget to help him, which so fired his troops that he gained a complete and speedy victory over his antagonist.

There need be no greater evidence of the fame of the holiness of St. Bridget than the fact that it was spread throughout Europe. At Seville in Spain, Lisbon, Portugal, and Placentia in Italy, Tours and Besançon in France, Namur in Belgium, Cologne in Germany, and even London, churches were built in her honor. This is why we often see and perhaps

wonder at little bright-eyed Italian and Spanish children answering to the softened titles of Brigetta and Brigida. In Germany may be found many a sturdy, blue-eyed, flaxen-haired Brigid, who calls the Saint of Ireland her patroness.

St. Brogan wrote the Life of St. Bridget in verse about three years after her death.

One of the Hebrides, or Western Islands, which belong to Scotland, near that of Ila, was named from a famous monastery built there in her honor. Another church of St. Bridget, in the province of Athol, was famous for miracles.

Her body was interred with those of St. Patrick and St. Columba, but all three were destroyed in the reign of King Henry the Eighth. The head of St. Bridget, instead of being in Ireland, where it would seem to belong, is kept in the Jesuit church of Lisbon. Her feast is celebrated on the first of February.

Notwithstanding the many beautiful associations connected with St. Bridget, her wonderful sanctity, the fame of her angelic life, which spread over every civilized country long before our own was discovered, it can not be denied that in America particularly, a certain obloquy has been attached to the name, principally on account of the ignorance and prejudice of those who have sought to belittle it. Irish fathers and mothers who bestow it upon their daughters are few and far between. This should not be so. Unfortunately, this prejudice has extended so far and has had so bad an effect that many who bear the name discard it on their arrival in America.

But there are many exceptions to this very reprehensible custom. as the following story will illustrate.

A comely young Irish girl, not long in America, went to live as a domestic in the

house of a wealthy woman, who was kind but eccentric, and somewhat arbitrary in her methods of dealing with her servants. The young girl was called Bridget. Her untiring industry, cheerfulness, and neat, capable ways soon attracted the notice of her mistress, who had had a great deal of trouble with careless and impertinent servants. But this girl was like a ray of sunshine in the house. There was nothing to be found fault with but her name, which was odious in the ears of the daughter of the Puritans beneath whose roof it had been her fate to cast her lot. Her sweetness and gentleness, however, so won her mistress that she resolved to take her for her maid, feeling confident that she could soon learn to fulfill perfectly the duties required of her. One morning she summoned the girl, and said:

"Bridget, my maid, Aurélie, is about to leave me, to be married. She has served

me well, but I feel that in a little while you will be able to fill her place. You are quick, neat, and obliging; there is no doubt that you will be a success in the duties I shall require of you. What do you say?"

"I shall be very glad, ma'am," replied Bridget. "At least I can try."

"Then it is all settled. But there is something else. I do not like the name of Bridget. From this time forward you will be called Delia."

The face of the young girl flushed scarlet.

"I can not change the name that was given me in Baptism, ma'am," she said. "I could never deny my Patroness."

"But it is so common," said her mistress. "'Biddy' is a most undesirable name."

"My name is not 'Biddy,' but Bridget," said the girl. "But if I had to change at

all, I wouldn't mind 'Biddy' as much as Delia."

"Think about it, my dear. You may change your mind."

"It is no use, ma'am. Once and for all, I can not change my name."

"Not when you consider that your circumstances will be greatly improved? Your work lighter and more pleasant, and your wages higher?"

"No, ma'am."

"Go back to the kitchen then and help the cook," said her mistress, angrily. "That is where you belong."

Bridget bent her head respectfully and left the room. Six months later her employer sent for Bridget again and made her the same offer, under the same conditions. But the girl was immovable.

"Why are you so stubborn?" asked the mistress.

"It would seem like denying my coun-

try and my faith," answered this brave heroine of seventeen.

"Then call yourself what you please," was the reply. "But I want you to take the position I offered you."

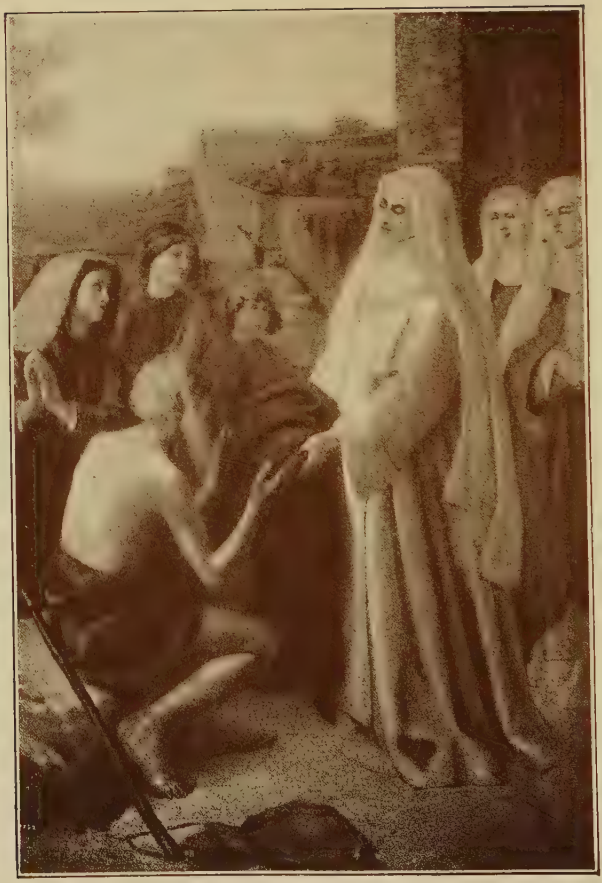
For five years Bridget served her mistress faithfully. Then the old lady fell ill, and after several months of suffering, died. When her will was opened it contained the following bequest:

"I bequeath the sum of five thousand dollars to my maid, Bridget Costigan, in consideration of her faithful service to me. and as a mark of my appreciation of her devotion to her country and her faith."

Those who heard or saw this provision did not understand, as the girl had never made any great display either of patriotism or piety, but Bridget knew, and a prayer of gratitude mingled with the tears of regret she shed for her dead mistress. When everything was settled she returned with

her legacy to her own country and the dear old mother whom she had left behind.

Her case was one in a thousand; few there are among the exiles of Erin who receive an earthly reward for fidelity to their birthright, but there are many, thank God, who glory in the names and titles that are but stumbling-blocks to their weaker fellow-countrymen.



ST. CATHERINE OF SIENNA.

ST. CATHARINE OF SIENA

SIENA is a most picturesque city. Like Rome, it sits enthroned on many hills, walled and ramparted, for in her day Siena was battle-clad and warlike. The birthplace of many a soldier, poet, musician, and painter, there is no town of Italy which can lay claim to greater fame. It was a city, too, where the great Italian nobles entertained their friends at all the principal holiday seasons, where any one who could sing a song or tell a story found a welcome, were he of gentle blood or simple. And yet, above all this, Siena was a religious town, famous for its churches, its sacred paintings and sculpture, its devotion to the Holy See. They tell a

story of Siena which will serve to show the sturdy piety of the old Sienese.

Early in the fourteenth century a statue of Venus was found buried in an orchard near the town, a relic probably of old Roman days. It was very beautiful, and as just about that time the new water-works were finished, they set the statue up above that fountain which they called "of Joy," *Fonte Gaia*. The people loved it for its beauty, and came often to look at it, not heeding or caring that it was the image of a heathen goddess.

For fourteen years the statue reigned queen of the Fountain of Joy, but during all that time there was civil strife in the city, brother fighting with brother, and father with son. And from day to day, the fights growing more fierce, the fountain ran red with blood, as the defeated contestants crept to its soothing waters to drink and die. Then people began to

whisper to each other that where the statue of the Virgin Mother should have stood, she who had long since been named the protectress of the city, they had placed the image of a heathen deity, and that peace would never come to Siena till she was deposed. The Sienese did not stop to consider either the beauty or the value of the graceful image; but once convinced that they had been guilty of a slight toward their blessed Patroness, they removed the statue, almost priceless as an object of art, not to an obscure quarter of the town, nor to a hiding place in one of Siena's many palaces, but they buried it once more, and the place of its sepulture to this day remains unknown.

But Siena's grandest and greatest crown came to it from another source, and that a humble one, as things are counted in this world. It came through St. Catharine, who was born there in 1347, not in a

palace, nor in the home of some great artist, but in the comparatively humble dwelling of her father, James Benincassa, who followed the calling of a dyer. There is no doubt that the family lived either above or behind the shop, for however prosperous a man might be in those days, no merchant or tradesman ever lived away from his place of business. We learn that the father of St. Catharine was a man of good condition, not rich, but very well to do. He was able to give his children a good education, which he did not fail to do, besides instilling into their souls the solid virtue and piety which he himself practiced.

Catharine was so pleasing in appearance, so quick to learn, so amiable in disposition, and so different from other children that from her earliest youth she was noticed by all with whom she had any intercourse Even people who did not know her were

wont to remark the noble-looking, sweet-faced child who came and went so frequently to and from the church, where she found her greatest pleasure.

As soon as she was capable of understanding the love and majesty of God and all she owed Him, she dedicated herself with all her virginal heart to His perpetual service. But her friends and parents soon began to think her religious practices too austere, and before she was twelve years of age, Catharine stole away to a solitude outside the town, where, when they found her, she begged to be allowed to spend her life in prayer and penance. This, of course, would have been impossible, though if her parents were willing she might have been permitted to retire to some convent, even at that early age. But they were not willing; they had other plans for their clever and beautiful daughter, who already attracted the

attention of all who saw her. They wished her to marry, and to marry well, according to their ideas. They foresaw that it would be possible for her to ally herself with some one above her own station in life, because of her talents and beauty, and already began to weave golden dreams of the good she might do her family by such a union. Catharine had always up to this time been an obedient and dutiful daughter, but now when she saw how firmly her parents were set on this scheme, she made known her intentions with regard to her future, told them of the vow of virginity she had made, and begged them to consent to her wish. This they refused to do, and from being fond and proud of their daughter, they became very harsh to her. They began to thwart her in every way. She had been allowed to occupy a small room by herself, where she had practiced her devotions and austerities;

but this was taken from her, and they obliged her to share the chamber of her sisters. In order that she might not have any time for prayer, they loaded her with the hardest work of the household, which had formerly been done by a hired servant. It is hard to believe that Christian parents could be guilty of such conduct, but it may have been that they thought her resolution but the whim of a very young girl, almost a child, and sought to win her from it by harsh measures, which may have given them some pain to inflict. Whatever their motive, it had no effect on Catharine. She bore all her trials with meekness and patience, never grumbled at the hard tasks which she was obliged to perform, and if anything grie ed her, it was the loss of her beloved little room, where she could be alone with God. But she soon began to realize that God is everywhere; that a soul can be united with

Him as entirely in the midst of crowds and confusion as in a solitude, provided the fervent desire is there.

Her sisters at one time induced her to dress in a manner befitting her youth and go with them to various amusements telling her that if she did so, she would soon see how mistaken she had been in giving up the joys of this world. As Catharine was very amiable, and always fearful of trusting her own opinions, she yielded for a short time, but very soon wearied of this kind of recreation, and returned to her former secluded manner of life. She was at this time not much more than fifteen years of age. It will readily be understood that such a course could not be pursued by every one. God has never meant it so. But in His Providence He chooses certain souls whom He wishes to raise to the highest degree of perfection, for His own glory and the edi

fication of others less holy. And when He does this, He also gives them every virtue necessary to support the trials and endure the mortifications they will have to undergo. St. Catharine was most austere toward her body. She lived upon boiled herbs, wore a rough haircloth under her garment, and a large iron girdle with sharp points clasped about her waist.

At this time she suffered greatly from illness, in which she firmly believed she was afflicted on account of her sins. In the eighteenth year of her age, her father and mother having ceased their persecutions and given their consent, she was received into the Third Order of St. Dominic.

"From that time," says one of her biographers, "her cell became her paradise, prayer her element, and her mortifications had no longer any restraint." She had already become widely known for her

sanctity; but her humility was such that she did not seem aware of it.

People brought oil, wine, corn, and various other articles of food to her to be distributed, well knowing that her ardent charity for the poor would not fail to place them where they were needed; and so abundantly did God bless her generous hands that very often these stores were miraculously increased, and she was also enabled to carry large quantities to the poor that would have been a heavy burden for a strong man. The ingratitude of those whom she served did not have the least effect in diminishing her kindness toward them. All her charity was done for the love of God.

But above all things Catharine longed and labored for the conversion of souls. The most hardened sinners could not withstand her learned discourses, which were short but filled with the spirit of

God. Thousands flocked to see and hear her, and priests were occupied day and night at Siena and Pisa in hearing the confessions of those whom St. Catharine had converted. While she was at Pisa, the people of Florence and Perugia revolted against the Pope. The two factions of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines also united against the Holy See. The esteem in which St. Catharine was held was shown by the fact that she should become their mediatrix. The Saint arrived at Avignon, where the Pope then resided, and had an interview with him. In admiration of her prudence and sanctity, he said to her: "I desire nothing but peace. I put the affair entirely in your hands, only I recommend to you the honor of the Church." When she returned to Siena she continued her former way of life, reconciling the most inveterate enemies. Although her efforts to secure peace were

not at that time successful, the sanctity of St. Catharine became still more widely known. Though the Pope had returned to Rome, the troubles in Italy still continued. Catharine was in great distress. She wrote to the Pope, asking him to omit nothing to pacify the people. But the rebellious Florentines refused to yield. Catharine, who had the soul of a warrior in the delicate body of a woman, resolved to go to Florence herself. She found the city plunged in disorder. Her life was at one time threatened, but her courage never failed. The rebels so admired her bravery that they at last submitted. Her mission ended, the Saint returned to her beloved solitude. Resuming her prayer and meditation, she thought only of God, who revealed to her mysteries not often understood by the greatest theologians. Some Italian *savants*, seeking to humiliate her, went to Siena and asked her the most

puzzling questions. She answered them so clearly yet with such humility that they retired in confusion. She had the same experience with three bishops, who afterward confessed to the Pope that they had never seen a soul so enlightened or yet so humble as Catharine.

For many years she had fasted so continually that she could almost do without food. Once she fasted from Ash Wednesday till Ascension Day, receiving only the Blessed Eucharist as food. She was not without enemies. Persons of extraordinary holiness seldom are. People called her a deceiver and a hypocrite, and even told the most dreadful calumnies about her; but she only clasped the cross of her Saviour more closely to her bosom, and welcomed the accusations as being a fit punishment for her sins. Once in a vision our Lord appeared to her and offered her two crowns, one of gold and

one of thorns, telling her to choose whichever she pleased. She answered, "I desire, O Lord, to live here always conformed to your Passion, and to find pain and suffering my repose and delight." Then taking up the crown of thorns, she pressed it upon her head. Her devotion to the Passion of Our Lord was her joy and consolation. It is, indeed, the sweetest and most consoling of all devotions, for by it we unite ourselves to all His sorrows and pains. When friends desert us, we can meditate upon His loneliness in the Garden of Olives, where even his chosen disciples were timid and afraid. If we are unjustly accused, we can remember the terrible sentence of Pilate and Herod, and the humiliations inflicted upon the Saviour of mankind.

The unhappy schism which afflicted the Church at the death of Gregory IX. filled our Saint with the most lively sorrow.

Pope Urban requested her to come to Rome, which she did; but her efforts produced very little result. The holy virgin was not rewarded during life with that peace in the Church she so ardently desired, and which came only after she had gone to her eternal reward.

Besides these examples of an edifying life, St. Catharine left behind her works which manifested the profundity of her mind. There are six treatises in the form of dialogues, a discourse on the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin, and three hundred and sixty-four letters which bear the imprint of a superior genius. She was also a poetess; her verses are filled with the praises of God.

But the principal feature that appeals to us in her character is her uniform sweetness and humility. It is told of her that on one occasion two women who were jealous of her sanctity — one of them a nun —

accused her of a great fault. Another person came to the Saint and told her what they had done. Catharine sent for them to visit her. They came.

"Sisters," she said, "I hear that according to your reports I have been guilty of an offense which might cause great scandal in the city. Will you tell me what it is, in order that I may amend my life?"

The women were filled with confusion and did not know what to say. At length the nun who had been false to her holy vocation answered:

"The accusation was false; we invented it out of the malice of our perverse hearts."

"How glad I am to know," said the Saint, "that in addition to the rest of my sins I do not have to answer for this also. Let us all kneel down and pray here that God will enable us to keep charity in our hearts and upon our lips for our friends and neighbors." With these words she knelt

and offered up such a beautiful and fervent prayer that the two women were moved to tears and the deepest contrition. The nun returned to her convent, where in future she led a holy life, and her companion in detraction was so impressed by what St. Catharine had said, and her loving forgiveness of so great a wrong, that she went about the city telling what had occurred, thereby increasing the respect the Sienese already had for St. Catharine, and at the same time atoning for her own fault.

St. Catharine's prayers were so full of zeal and earnestness that sinners whom nothing else could reclaim were often converted by hearing them. There was a citizen of Siena, a rich and powerful man, always in strife with his neighbors. Some one at last persuaded him to visit St. Catharine, who conversed with him at some length, but without effect. Sud-

denly she began to pray, and at that very instant a sudden change was wrought in the man. He too wept and confessed his sins, and at once became reconciled to his enemies and began to lead an exemplary life. Some time after he lost all or nearly all his riches. St. Catharine rejoiced at this, saying it was for his spiritual good.

Two famous bandits and assassins were about to be executed. Nothing could move them from their state of sinfulness; they swore and blasphemed in rage and despair. In her convent cell St. Catharine was on her knees before the crucifix beseeching Him who had died to redeem them, who had pardoned the penitent thief on the cross, to pardon them and touch their hearts. Suddenly they burst forth into cries and tears of repentance; then confessed their sins, and proclaimed that they were ready to accept the punish-

ment which they were about to suffer for their crimes.

St. Catharine never took any credit to herself for these conversions. She was wont to say that all things would be granted to all men if they would pray earnestly and persevere in prayer.

Her ceaseless labors and fatigues, her constant fasting and traveling from place to place, no doubt shortened the life of St. Catharine. She died at Rome on the 29th of April, 1380, at the age of thirty-three. Her body was interred in the church of the Minerva, where it lies under the altar. Her skull is still preserved in the convent of the Dominicans at Siena, as well as the instruments of penance she was accustomed to use. She was canonized by Pius II. in 1461. Urban VIII. transferred her Feast to the 30th of April. After her death, as during her life, she protected her fervent clients. A girl who was

called Catharine had led an evil life and was cast into prison for stealing, with the prospect of remaining there for the remainder of her days; for during that period in Italy it was difficult to escape from the clutches of the law unless one had friends or influence. This poor Catharine had neither; she knew nothing of God or the saints. She had a gentle and kindly disposition, however, and thus won the affection of her fellow-prisoners. But she was very melancholy and sorrowful at the sad prospect before her. An old woman who was in the habit of coming to the prison with bread soon began to talk to her of God. The poor creature heard her with delight, and when she learned that she bore the name of one of Italy's greatest saints, she at once placed herself under her protection. From that moment her soul was touched, she bewailed her evil life, became a model prisoner, and taught to

others the truths she herself had so recently learned. So well did she conduct herself that she was finally pardoned by the authorities, but refusing to leave the prison, she was known as the guardian angel of the place. Women who had formerly been terrors to the jailers were converted by her words, and more than all by her prayers — a gift which seemed to have been bestowed upon her by the great St. Catharine of Siena.

It is not to be imagined that the soul of St. Catharine was always serene. On the contrary, she was afflicted with many temptations, and at times oppressed by a great sadness which often she could not succeed in banishing, even by fervent prayer. In this she resembles many other holy persons whose sanctity does not preserve them from trials and fears far greater than those to which souls less sanctified are subject. Almighty God wishes us

to read a lesson in this fact; viz., that if those who are his chosen servants sometimes grow faint and are fearful of falling by the way, we, who are so far beneath them in the Christian virtues, must not be surprised when the spirit of discouragement assails us. While we are human, we must expect to suffer from weariness even in well-doing; while we are fighting the evils with which the devil, the world, and the inclinations of our own flesh constantly surround us, it will help us to remember that the holiest saints were once in the same condition. But God helped them, as he helps us — as he delivered the great St. Catharine from the multitude of trials and temptations that harassed her brave, pure soul.

We may admire the sublime charity and humility of the saints, but turn from them with a sigh, exclaiming, "Such things would be impossible to me — they were saints." Yet God wishes us all to be saints,

according to our lights, our capacities, and our state in life. It was the comprehension of this that made St. Catharine what she was, the admiration of savants, counselor of popes and kings, the arbiter of destinies, a princess of charities, an angel of humility, a shining light of piety. She died to herself daily, so must we. And with the spirit of self-sacrifice the taste of humiliations and suffering will become as sweet waters to our lives. Without these special gifts of God, what would all the gifts of the world avail? Nothing — for these would have had no solid foundation. Learning, intelligence, even sweetness of disposition, avail naught if they are not based upon the gifts of the Holy Spirit with which God endows us all, but which come to perfection only among his saints — those ever blooming flowers that adorn the garden of heaven.

ST. ELIZABETH

ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY

IT is related of St. Elizabeth, who was the daughter of the king of Hungary and Gertrude his wife, that on the night of her birth a celebrated astronomer, called Klingsohr, stood for a long time looking at the stars.

"What news have you?" asked the people around him.

"Joyful news," said he. "I see a beautiful star which rises in Hungary, and which throws its light from there to Marburg, and from Marburg over the whole world. Know that this very night there is born to the king of Hungary a daughter who shall be named Elizabeth, who shall be given in marriage to the son of the prince here, who shall be a Saint.

and whose sanctity shall rejoice and console the whole Christian world."

At the very hour Elizabeth was born. From her infancy she seemed a favored child of God. Jesus and Mary were the first words she spoke. The prediction of Klingsohr had been made in the city of Eisenach, in the kingdom of Thuringia and Hesse, and Duke Hermann, the sovereign, had heard of it. He was very curious to know more of the princess whom it had been foretold his son should marry. Elizabeth was only three years old when the fame of her piety began to be spread everywhere through her father's dominions. Before she was born they had been plunged in war and discord; after her birth all was peace. One day a monk who had come from Hungary stopped at the court of Duke Hermann.

"Tell me," said the duke, "is all true that they tell of the daughter of King Andrew?"

"The half is not told," replied the monk. "In my own case I would say that for four years I was blind. I begged the angelic child to lay her hand upon my eyes. She did so, and I was cured. All Hungary rejoices in this child, for she has brought peace with her."

Duke Hermann made no delay in deciding that he would ask the king of Hungary to give his daughter Elizabeth in marriage to Louis, his eldest son. At the same time he requested that the king would allow the child to be educated with her future husband. The ambassadors told the king and queen of the beauties of their country, the goodness of the duke, and the joyful life that would be hers should her parents permit their little daughter to depart. At first they could not bear the thought of sending her away, but after a while they gave their consent, and made a great feast in her honor. At

this time Elizabeth was only four years old. When all was ready for departure, she was dressed in a splendid robe, trimmed with gold and silver, laid in a cradle of solid gold, and given to the Thuringians. They were met by the duke and duchess at Eisenach. The duke took the lovely child in his arms and pressed her to his heart. Then they journeyed on to the castle of Wartburg, which was the home of the royal couple, and was also to be that of Elizabeth. There she was betrothed to Louis, who was then eleven years of age.

The place which became the dearest spot in the castle to the young princess was the chapel. Before she could read she would kneel in front of a large book of Psalms and try to decipher the letters. She knelt for long hours at the foot of the altar, never seeming to grow tired. When at play with her young companions, among whom was Agnes, her future sister-in-law,

she would find the chapel closed, it was her custom to kiss the lock, the door, and even the walls of the sacred place.

Sometimes she would take her little friends to the cemetery, where they would ecite together the following prayer, composed by Elizabeth:

"Here lie the bones of the dead; these people were once living like us, and are now dead as we shall be; that is why we must love God. Let us kneel down and say together: Lord, by Thy cruel death, and by Thy dear Mother Mary, deliver these poor souls from their sufferings. Lord, by Thy five sacred wounds, save us."

She had a special devotion to St. John the Evangelist, the disciple whom Jesus loved. In those days it was the custom for princes and princesses to choose a Patron among the Apostles. Twelve candles were placed upon the altar, and

on each was written the name of one of the Apostles. Without looking the children selected a candle, and the name they chose was to be in future their Patron Saint. Elizabeth was very anxious that St. John should fall to her share, and so it proved. Through her whole life she never refused any favor which was asked of her in the name of St. John.

Every day she practised some act of mortification. When playing any game in which she was victorious, she would cease, saying, "Now while I am having such good luck I will stop, for the love of God."

Everything went well with Elizabeth until she was about nine years old, when Duke Hermann died. His son Louis was barely sixteen at the time. The duke had loved Elizabeth as dearly as though she were his own daughter; but his wife, the Duchess Sophia, had never shared this love. She did not approve of her great

piety, nor of her association with the poor, to whom she gave nearly all her pocket money. She and her daughter Agnes would have preferred a princess who had more vanity, who was fond of dress and of passing her time in idleness and pleasure. They began to persecute her, and many of the nobles and ladies of the court followed their example. But Louis remained faithful to his chosen bride. He was obliged to be away a great deal and during his absence it was proposed to send her back to her father. When Louis heard of this, he sprang to his feet and said:

"Do you see that mountain which rises up there before us? Well, if it were a mass of gold from base to summit, and were to become mine on condition that I should send my Elizabeth away, I would not do it. She is dearer to me than all the countries and all the riches of the world." Soon after this they were married.

After St. Louis of France there is no character in history more beautiful than that of Louis, the husband of Elizabeth. No one could see him without loving him. He was pious, prudent, generous to the poor; his whole life was in accordance with the motto he had chosen: "Piety, Chastity, Justice." After her marriage Elizabeth found it easier to practise the charity which filled her soul, and which merited for her the title during life of "Patroness of the Poor." She not only gave away dainties and clothing she did not need, but actually the food from her table and the garments from her own person. From her infancy she could not endure the sight of a poor person without feeling her heart pierced with grief. One day she was going down into the city from her castle of Wartburg, and, as usual, was met on the way by a crowd of beggars. She gave them all the money she had about

her, and was proceeding on her journey when she saw a very old man who had been unable to keep up with the others. When she saw him stretching out his hand and was unable to give him anything, she drew off her glove, embroidered with jewels, saying, "Here, poor man, take this; you can sell it and buy food with the money."

One of the courtiers, hearing this, fell behind, bought the glove from the beggar, placed it on top of his helmet, and ever after was victorious in tournament and battle. He declared on his death-bed that it was all due to Elizabeth's glove. She loved to visit the poor in their hovels; she washed them, dressed their sores, and even prepared their broth with her own hands. Laden with bread, milk, eggs, and meat hidden in her cloak, she would steal quietly from the castle, and following a rough, steep road, then as now called the "Knee-breaker," and which can

still be seen, she would go from house to house in the village.

One day her husband, returning from the chase, met her thus employed, and said to her:

"What are you carrying, my dear Elizabeth?"

At the same time he pulled open the folds of her cloak, and her arms were full of beautiful roses. As it was the middle of winter, he knew it was a miracle that he saw, and never after forbade her to exercise her charity, although his mother often complained of the manner in which Elizabeth spent her time and used the substance of her husband.

Among the sick whom she cared for was a poor little leper, named Heli, who was such a disgusting sight that no one would have anything to do with him. The kind heart of Elizabeth could not bear this. She washed his sores, dressed them with

ointment, and then put him in her own bed. When the duke, who had been away, returned to the castle, he was met by his mother, who told him what Elizabeth had done. Dearly as he loved her, he felt that this was going too far. He hurried upstairs to his wife's room. His mother took him by the hand and led him to the bed. When he turned down the covers, instead of a leper, he saw the figure of Jesus Christ on the cross lying on the couch. Falling on his knees, he cried aloud: "Lord, have pity on me, a poor sinner. I am not worthy to behold all these wonders, as I know but too well; help me to become a man according to Thy heart and will." There is no doubt that the Almighty permitted this wonderful thing to happen in order that Louis might realize the great holiness of his wife and allow her to follow the wishes of her heart, without preventing or chiding her.

St. Elizabeth was as simple as a little child. She would have been happier as a poor woman than as a princess. One night she said to her husband:

"My Lord, if it will not annoy you, I will tell you of a thought I have as to the kind of life we might lead in order to serve God."

"Tell me, sweet friend," said the duke, "what are your thoughts on the subject."

"I wish," replied Elizabeth, "that we had but a single piece of land, which would give us enough to live on, and about two hundred sheep. Then you could work the soil, drive the horses, and I would take care of the sheep and shear them. All this we would do for the love of God."

Louis repeated this to the Archbishop of Treves, who in turn related it to others, and so it has come down to us.

When "the dear St. Elizabeth," as she has always been called by the Germans,

was only nineteen years old, God prepared for her young and delicate shoulders the cross she was to carry all her life long. She was already the mother of four children, and a most fond and devoted one. Her husband was twenty-seven years of age. The Crusades had been going on in the Holy Land for some time, and Duke Louis felt it his duty to join his comrades. When he told Elizabeth of his intention, she was filled with sorrow, but did not oppose him by a single word. She went with him as far as the frontier, and they clung to each other in parting, unable to say "Farewell." At last the duke took from his finger the ring which he always wore and said:

"Elizabeth, O dearest of sisters and best of wives, see this ring which I carry with me and upon which is engraved in sapphire the Lamb of God with His banner. Whoever shall bring this ring to you,

dear and faithful sister, and shall tell you that I am alive or dead, believe whatever he may say to you." Then he departed, and Elizabeth swooned away. When she came to herself again, she returned to her home, feeling in her heart that she would never see him again. And she was right. Louis never reached the Holy Land. He was taken with chills and fever. They left him at the port of Otranto, and as he had lived but for God, so it was easy for him to die. Some time before the end he saw a flock of white doves flying about the room where he lay. "See, see!" he exclaimed, "I must fly away with those beautiful doves," and the next moment he expired.

At first they told Elizabeth that he had been taken prisoner, as they feared to break the sad news all at once.

"God will come to his aid," she said. "Let us pray to Him, and our loved one

will soon return." Then her mother-in-law showed her the ring.

"He is dead," said the duchess, and Elizabeth burst into tears.

Her grief was heart-rending. Her sorrows had just begun. The younger brothers of Louis, Henry and Conrad, persuaded by evil counsels, expelled the widow of their brother and her children from the duchy. Her mother-in-law, who had never been very friendly toward her, now interceded for her, crying: "She shall remain with me. No one shall take her from me." But they were parted by force, and Elizabeth was driven forth in the depth of winter from the home which had so long been hers. It can hardly be believed, but history tells us it is a fact, that the kind princess who had been so good to all her subjects now went in vain from door to door asking for shelter. The people wishing to please their new master,

who had ordered that no one should receive her, would not admit her into their houses.

Carrying her babe in her arms, and followed by her other children and two maids of honor who would not leave her, she came at last to a miserable inn, where they found shelter for the night. They were cold and hungry, yet not a bite did they have to eat. The children slept at last, and Elizabeth hearing the midnight bell ringing in the Franciscan church went there to pray. Next day she pawned some jewels to purchase food, and finally a kind-hearted priest took the wanderers in. She began to earn her living by spinning, and even from the scanty sum she received found something to spare for the poor. She did not murmur at the ingratitude of those whom she had formerly helped, but thought she was being punished for some fault of her own.

One day while crossing a muddy stream

she met an old beggar to whom she had often given alms. There were very narrow stepping stones in the middle; instead of making way for Elizabeth, the old man pushed her so that she fell into the water. But this was not enough. He began to jeer at her, crying out:

"Now see yourself! You would not live like a duchess when you were one; now you are poor and stretched in the mud, and I am not going to help you out."

But Elizabeth, patient and gentle as ever, picked herself up and wiped her soiled garments as well as she could. As soon as her relatives learned of her sad condition, her aunt the abbess of Kitzingen sent for her to come with her children to the abbey, where she remained some time. Her uncle, the bishop of Bamberg, wished her to marry again, thinking that she would have a protector for her children, but she refused. In order to escape the entreaties of

her uncle on this subject, Elizabeth went to the convent of Erfurth, where she lived for a time. The glass from which she drank is preserved there to this day, and on the Feast of the Saint all the scholars are permitted to drink from it.

About this time the body of her husband was brought from Otranto to be buried in his own country. Her uncle begged her to return to Bamberg so that, though she was not allowed to go back to Thuringia, she might see the beloved remains. She hastened to do so. Her anguish was great, but she bowed to the will of God. This was a good opportunity for reminding Henry how unfaithful he had been to the memory of his brother in banishing Elizabeth from his kingdom. One of the knights, called Varila, who had always pleaded the cause of the widow, had the courage to stand up in the assembly and beg Duke Henry to restore her. Sophia,

her mother, also joined her tears and prayers with the entreaties of Varila. The heart of the duke was touched; he ordered Elizabeth and her children to be sent for, and on his knees begged her pardon for what he had done.

After her return, having arranged for the education of her children, she resolved to lead a penitential life for the rest of her days. She wore the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis, passed her time in prayer, visiting the sick and poor, and spinning, like the meanest among her subjects. All her income was used for charity.

While still in this world she worked miracles. She made the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, and the blind to see. On one occasion a poor cripple cried out to her, "O brilliant sun, resplendent among all women, I am from Reinhartsbrunn, where thy husband reposes; for the love of his soul come to my help and heal me!"

Elizabeth gazed at him with tears in her eyes, but a smile upon her lips, and he was cured.

Perhaps more than any other saint St. Elizabeth united within herself the virtues of Mary and Martha. When the Lord, in the person of the poor, deaf, dumb, blind, and hungry, came to visit her, he found her always occupied. She never knew an idle moment, but at the same time she was always engaged in prayer, for she made her life from dawn to set of sun one long and ceaseless prayer. Every menial service she performed, every household duty, however trifling, had first to be offered to Him for His blessing and approval, and when, her tasks completed, the hour arrived when before the Blessed Sacrament of the altar she could prostrate herself in adoration and humility, she would remain for a long time with her eyes, her hands, and her heart uplifted to heaven.

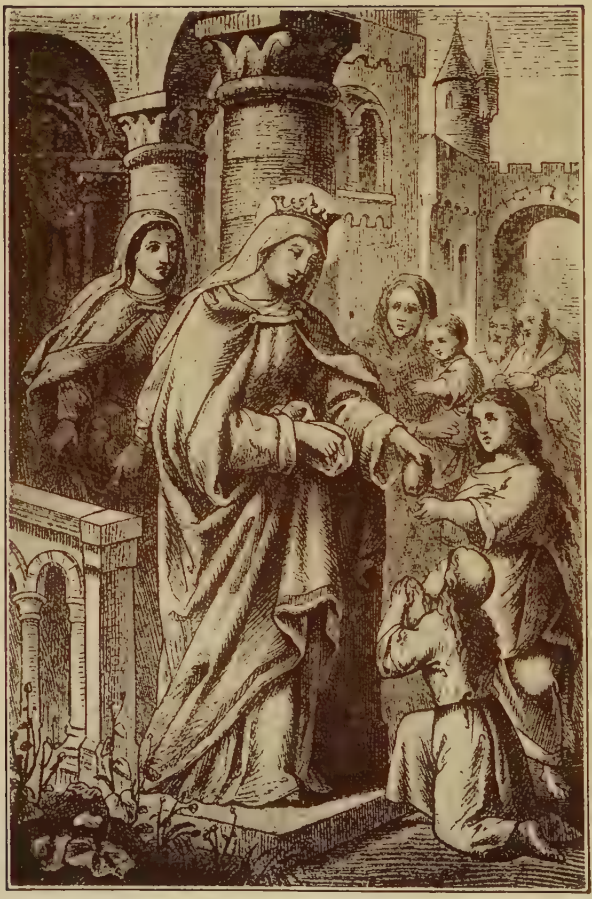
Sometimes, so desirous was she of being alone with God, that she would leave the crowded church and go into the fields, for she loved to be under the roof of heaven, where the blue-arched sky, the broad expanse of light by day and of stars by night reminded her in a special manner of the majesty of Him who created them. There is a tradition that once when it was raining heavily, Elizabeth knelt upon the bare ground, praying, and that while all the place round about was soaked with rain, neither she nor the spot where she was kneeling received a single drop.

Prayer was to her, food, drink, nourishment of every kind; nay, life itself. Would to God that in these busy, reckless days of ours, St. Elizabeth could endow us with some of the intensity and devotion with which she prayed day after day. The spirit of the times is perpetually goading us on to this or that worldly

enjoyment or employment; we seem to have no time for prayer. We give God a few moments at the beginning of the day, and a few more at the end; that is all. Sometimes we realize this and reproach ourselves with it, and resolve to do better; but alas, seldom or never do we seek—for if we truly sought, we could find it—that quiet, prayerful hour that is meat and drink to the hungry soul, and medicine to the tired and world-sick heart. St. Elizabeth's dear saint, St. John the Evangelist, had taught her that sweet lesson of loving prayer which he knew so well, and which was so much a part of his own nature, and it steeped her spirit to the full in supernatural things.

But no human frame could endure the privations to which the Saint exposed herself. Although scarcely twenty-four years of age, Elizabeth began to feel the approach of death, welcoming it as a pass-

port to the heaven she so much desired. She had no illness, but her poor body which she had so mortified was weak. Little by little she faded away, and she was obliged to keep her bed. Joy filled her countenance and peace beamed in her eyes. So while those who watched beside her waited for the end, she passed away, and for some moments they did not know she was gone. This was on the night of November 19, 1231. Her feast is kept on that day. From the hour of her death miracles were worked at her tomb. Weak and frail as she was by nature, God gave her that strength which is born of holiness. Devotion to her has never waned. She was canonized by Pope Clement IV. in 1267.



ST MARGARET OF SCOTLAND.

ST. MARGARET, QUEEN OF SCOTLAND

ST. MARGARET was the niece of St. Edward the Confessor, and daughter of Edward, surnamed Atheling. After the death of their uncle, Margaret and Edgar, her brother, were obliged to flee from England from the persecution of William the Norman, successor to the Confessor, who had seized upon the crown. The ship in which these young people put to sea suffered severe storms, and was driven by a tempest to the coast of Scotland, where King Malcolm received them in the most hospitable manner. Malcolm had himself been an exile, and could thus feel for the misfortunes of others banished from their native land. He also owed a

debt of gratitude to Edward the Confessor.

Macbeth, general of the Scottish troops, had murdered Duncan, the king and father of Malcolm, and the young prince had only saved his own life by flight. After wandering through many lands he found safety at the court of the English king, who gave him ten thousand men to help him. With these he soon recovered his dominions from the hands of the treacherous and ambitious Macbeth. He was crowned king of Scotland at Scone in 1057.

It was therefore natural that he should extend a royal welcome to Prince Edgar and his young sister Margaret when they in turn fled from the power of the usurper. He went to meet them with a grand array of soldiers, gave them rooms in his palace, and bade them consider themselves as his guests until better times should dawn for them. They had not been there long

before William the Norman sent word that they must be delivered into his hands.

"Thinks the Norman, then, that Malcolm is so base as to betray his guests into the power of their arch-enemy?" cried Malcolm. "Never!"

William then sent word by a messenger that he would make war upon Scotland, believing that Malcolm would be frightened into compliance with his wishes. But the brave young king only laughed in scorn, as he replied:

"I have been a wanderer on the face of the earth, even as they are now. I have known kindness from the hands of their royal uncle. For me his troops fought, and with them I conquered. It is now my turn to show gratitude, and I am ready to fight for these exiles as their country once did for me. Let the Norman send his soldiers. We are not afraid of him."

William at once dispatched a large number of troops into Scotland, and Malcolm was rewarded for his fidelity to his friends. He not only defeated William, but did it so thoroughly that the boundaries between England and Scotland were definitely arranged. King's Cross on Stanemoor was chosen as the line between the two countries. On one side was the statue and arms of the king of England, on the other of the king of Scotland.

While the Princess Margaret remained in Scotland she endeared herself to all who knew her by her extreme amiability, piety, and loveliness of character. She joined in all the festivities which had been made for her pleasure and that of her brother, because her heart was too grateful and her manners too polite to show that she did not care for them; but her nature craved something far higher than diversion or amusement. From her earliest years

she had cared nothing for the vanities of the world; she knew that in many cases they work poison in the soul, and keep it from being occupied with the concerns of heaven. She was very intelligent, witty, and vivacious, and her beauty was far beyond the ordinary. But she was fond of prayer and meditation, in which she spent many hours of the day, and when they had looked vainly everywhere else for the young princess, they would usually find her in the chapel; or perhaps she would be found coming from the cottage of some poor sick woman to whom she had taken nourishing food and consoling words.

Margaret learned to love the wild and rocky country of Scotland, which had given her refuge in her need, and the king very soon felt that she was the one above all others whom he would choose for the queen of his beloved land. He was not versed in fine speeches, nor in the ways

of courtiers, but he was a true, just man, and Margaret saw in him the one whom God had selected for her husband. When he asked her in marriage, she at once gave her consent. They were married at the king's royal castle of Dunfermline, built in the midst of a beautiful plain and surrounded by woods, rocks, and rivers, a work of grandeur and a tower of strength against the enemy.

Malcolm and Margaret were an ideal husband and wife. The king was rough and unpolished, but he was sincere; while Margaret was gentle and lovely, of gracious carriage, amiable character, and skilled in every feminine accomplishment. Her whole life was employed in making the king and their subjects happy, setting an example of virtue and piety which all admired and many followed. Malcolm left all the domestic management of the kingdom to his wife, and the prudence and

foresight with which she attended to the most weighty affairs were the admiration and astonishment not only of her own kingdom but of foreign nations.

This pious royal couple had many children, all of whom inherited the good qualities of their parents. The queen was the mother of six boys, Edward, Edmund, Edgar, Ethelred, Alexander, and David. Edward, Alexander, and David all came in succession to the throne of Scotland, and all proved themselves worthy sons of their saintly mother. There were two daughters, Maud, or Matilda, married to Henry I. of England, and Mary, who became the wife of the Count of Boulogne. The queen did not allow her children to be brought up in luxury. She ordered that their food be of the simplest. They were trained to hardships, and taught how idle and empty are the things of this world when they are not used as a means to

gain heaven. She took them with her on her visits to the poor and suffering, and made them minister to the sick with their own hands.

When Queen Margaret first became the wife of Malcolm, the Scottish people had grown very careless about religion. But she soon saw to it that pious and zealous clergymen were installed, who went about among their flock advising, exhorting, and doing good in every way. The example of their priests soon had a beneficial effect upon the people, and the good queen had the satisfaction of seeing them restored to their former faith and devotion. She also established schools among them and was delighted to see how eagerly they welcomed their teachers and how rapidly they learned all that was taught them.

If St. Margaret had been a haughty sovereign, thinking only of her own comfort and how to divert herself from day

to day, Scotland would have been plunged in warfare and disorders during the whole of her reign, as her husband, though a king, was a rude man living in rude times and educated only in the art of warfare and the chase. It is said that his wife taught him to read and write. As an instance of how skilfully she contrived to win the nobles over to her Christian practices, it is related that she conceived an idea of making the sober and discreet conduct of those about her and the conformity to the practices of religion a pleasure to themselves instead of an irksome duty. For example, after she had come to the throne she observed that the Scotch nobles had an irreverent manner of rising from the table without saying grace, which was always pronounced by her pious chaplain, Theodoric. Therefore she promised such among them as would remain till grace was said an extra cup of wine. This was called the

"grace-cup," or "thank-cup," and as most of the nobles were eager to claim it, the fashion spread from palace to castle, from castle to farm, and from farm to peasant's hut, till the custom of saying grace became an established usage in the land.

Whenever she stirred out of her palace, so great was the fame of her charity, she was surrounded by troops of widows and orphans and other distressed persons, who looked upon her as a mother, and these she never sent away without relief. At that time life was far more simple than now. Fancy any royal couple at the present day regularly washing the feet of the poor, and waiting upon them daily at table! Yet this is what Queen Margaret and her royal husband did nearly every day of their lives. They never sat down to dinner without first having served nine little orphans and twenty-four grown-up poor. In Lent and Advent they often

called in as many as three hundred poor, the king serving the men and the queen the women with the same dishes that were served on the royal table. It is related that an ancient enemy of the king's family, having heard of the charity of the royal couple, would not believe that their benevolence was anything but a cloak for pride and vanity. He thought they made a show of this charity in order to obtain the admiration and love of their subjects and the applause of their neighbors.

"We hear of these things," said he, "but we do not see them. It is easy to noise about outside, through the medium of paid hirelings, the Christlike charity of the king and queen of Scotland. I would never believe it unless I could see it for myself."

"Nevertheless it is true," said his informant.

"Have you seen it?"

"No, but I have heard from those who have talked with the poor whom they have benefited and consoled."

"Bribed all to spread abroad the fame of vain and officious deeds," said the doubter.

"Go then and learn for yourself the truth of what I have said, and of which all the world is talking."

"Go I will," said the other, "and in such guise that I shall see and know all that is being done."

Disguising himself as a pilgrim, and taking the further precaution to wound his foot with a stone, that he might be the more an object of sympathy, the scoffer betook himself over many a weary mile to the palace of the king. Arrived there, he found himself about eleven o'clock in the day at the end of a long procession of men and women who were making their way to the courtyard of the royal

domain. He said nothing, but followed them. When they entered the gates two persons, one a man in whom he recognized Malcolm, came down the broad steps. The other, a woman whom he had never seen, was plainly attired in a gray stuff gown, girded about her waist over a black petticoat of coarse serge. She was very beautiful and winning, and in spite of the plainness of her attire he at once deemed that this was the queen of Scotland. The men of his company went to one side, the women to the other, and in front of the tables on which servants were already placing smoking dishes the king and queen knelt down to wash the feet of the travelers.

Much impressed, but wishing still further to try the charity and humility of the royal pair, our pilgrim said, when the king in his ministrations had reached him:

"My Lord and Sovereign, I am suffering from a wound in my foot which is

very painful. Methinks the touch of a woman's hand would be more gentle upon it than thine."

The king smiled, glanced at his wife, and replied:

"Thou sayest truly, the queen hath a healing touch, and when she has finished her work yonder, I will ask her to attend to thee. Go sit thee down yonder on the bench and I will speak to her."

The man obeyed, the king whispered to his wife, and she smilingly followed him to the spot where the pilgrim was seated. Bringing first water, salve, and soft linen cloths, she washed, anointed, and bound up the wound. When all was done, she bade him go in God's name and partake of the food which was set out on the tables.

"Not, madame, till I have craved thy pardon and that of thy most noble consort for the false estimation in which I have held thee."

He then gave them his real name and rank and they recognized in him one who had been a most bitter enemy of the royal house of Scotland. They invited him to their own table, gave him lodging for the night, and the next morning he returned the way he came, relating their praises to all whom he met, bound thenceforth in chains of loyalty and love to the most Christian rulers of the kingdom.

Besides the good works already mentioned, the queen erected hospitals, built churches, and restored to their former estate many noble families rendered poor by the wars which had devastated Scotland for so many years. In order to find time for prayer, she slept very little, and ate barely enough to sustain life. Says Theodoric, who was a monk and her confessor, and who later wrote her Life:

"She seemed only rather to taste than to take her meal. . . . Her works were

more wonderful than her miracles, though these were not wanting to her. . . . When she would be speaking to me of the sweetness of everlasting life, her words were full of all grace. . . . In the church no one was more given to silence, no one more intent than she at prayer. What was blameworthy she wished me always to inform her, of praise she desired naught. Rather it abashed and fretted her. In her garb, save on state occasions, she was most simple, though she had gowns and head gear and mantles of the most costly stuffs, and jewels, brought from England as her dowry, of the greatest value. Every year she kept two Lents of forty days each: the one at the usual time, the other in preparation for the holy Feast of Christmas. She recited every day the short offices of the Holy Trinity, of the Passion of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, and of the dead. In short, she lived the life of a mortified religious in the midst of the world."

Like most of the kings of that period, Malcolm rejoiced in war. Although it was almost a necessity, as hostile nobles were always in rebellion, the queen prevailed upon him to improve his kingdom by the arts of peace. She represented to him that when the men of a country are always on the battlefield the meadows cannot be tilled, nor the industries carried on, and worse than all other evils, war leaves in its train thousands of widows and helpless orphans. She considered war the greatest scourge of the earth. It was to leave her a widow, like those whose fate she had so often deplored.

The king of England, surnamed William Rufus, on account of his florid skin and red hair, had besieged the castle of Northumberland and killed all the garrison. Malcolm in turn besieged it, and the English, reduced almost to starvation, offered to surrender the castle once more

to its rightful owner on condition that the king would come and receive the key with his own hand.

It is not known whether what followed was planned or not, but when Malcolm advanced to receive the keys of the castle the soldier who presented them, holding them on the point of a spear, with the basest treachery thrust the point of the weapon into the eye of the king and killed him. On that very day the queen, who had advised her husband to leave the castle, was praying in her oratory.

She had been sad and despondent all day, something unusual for one who was always so cheerful and full of hope that she diffused brightness and joy all about her. She said to those present:

"Perhaps this day a greater evil hath befallen Scotland than any this long time."

She soon heard the news of the tragic

death of her husband, but far from wishing to avenge him, she hoped they would allow the enemy to depart in peace. But Edward, her son, would not suffer this; he was resolved to avenge the death of his father and was himself slain.

This double misfortune was more than the good queen, already ill and broken-hearted, could endure. Says Theodoric in his long account of her last sickness:

"She had a presentiment of her death long before it happened, and speaking to me in secret, she began to pour out to me her whole life . . . so that I was also obliged to weep." In this discourse these two pious friends passed several hours. At length the queen said: "Farewell, for I shall not long be here; you will stay some little time after me. Two things I have to desire of you: the one is that as long as you live you will remember my poor soul in your prayers and Masses;

the other is that you assist my children and teach them to fear and love God."

Previous to this she had called for the famous Black Cross, containing valuable relics, among them one of the true cross. She embraced it with great fervor, then held it with both hands in front of her. With her eyes fixed upon it, she recited the *Miserere* and other prayers. Alluding to the death of her husband and son, she said:

"I thank Thee, O Almighty God, that in sending me so great an affliction at the end of my life Thou wouldst purify me from my sins, as I hope by Thy mercy." Her last words were:

"O Lord Jesus Christ, who hast by Thy death given life to the world, deliver me from all evil."

She died in the forty-seventh year of her age, and was canonized by Pope Innocent XII. in 1251. Her feast is kept on the 10th of June. She was buried, according

to her own desire, in the church she had built at Dunfermline; but during the Reformation period of storm and stress her body and that of Malcolm were rescued from the plundering, sacrilegious mob who made religion a cloak for many wanton crimes. The head of Queen Margaret was carried to Edinburgh, later to Antwerp, and still later to the Scotch Jesuits at Douay, in whose church it is still kept in a silver case.

The remainder of her relics and those of her husband were taken to Spain, where Philip the Second built a chapel in the Escurial for their reception.

Nothing can more truly illustrate the benefit of having had a virtuous mother than the example followed by her children. Many mothers are virtuous themselves, but not all are successful in making their sons and daughters the same. They are too indulgent, too fearful that their chil-

dren will have to suffer; they take every labor and trouble upon themselves, leaving their offspring to enjoy only the good things of life. Such was not the method of the holy queen of Scotland. For many generations her children and children's children, animated by the force of her example, rose up and called her blessed by the prudence and justice of their own deeds.

Her son Edgar reigned in peace for nine years, a good and pious king, reverenced by Christians and feared by criminals. His brother Alexander succeeded him on the throne and followed in his pious footsteps.

There is no inheritance which parents can bestow upon their children equal to that of virtue and piety, and there is no legacy by which children can profit more. If they have besides an abundance of this world's goods, sound principles, devotion to religion, and charity toward their

poorer neighbor, these will serve to keep them from falling into the temptations to which the rich are subject, and cause the wealth with which they have been endowed to be a blessing to all about them. And if poverty be their portion, the lessons of endurance, patience, and resignation learned in childhood from pious parents will do much to alleviate the pains of their condition.

Three generations distant from Queen Margaret of Scotland, her grandson, Malcolm IV., still preserved the legacy of truth, piety, charity, and purity left him by his ancestress. The virtues of the noble queen lived again in this honored king who is still esteemed in Scotland a saint.

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